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President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Maxime Bernier, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Bernier (Canada) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to speak before this Assembly. The United Nations is the very embodiment of the commitment we have all made to contribute to peace and security and to create better living conditions in a greater climate of freedom. For its part, the Government I represent has never ceased strengthening its actions in the international arena. The Canadian Government is a responsible partner and a fully engaged Power. We are guided by unwavering principles. Canada's commitment is not only linked to our interests, but above all to the values that inspire Canadians, which are freedom, the rule of law, democracy and human rights. They are the values underlying our presence in Afghanistan, in Haiti, in the Sudan and elsewhere in the world.

(*spoke in English*)

And they are the values and aspirations that are embodied in the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the inherent dignity and the rights of all members of the human family are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace. Article 1 of the Declaration says further "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".

Those are not abstract concepts. They are real and concrete concepts with effects both immediate and profound. Promoting them is not enough. They must be protected and defended, particularly when they are under assault — in Burma, in Afghanistan, in the Sudan, in Iran and elsewhere.

In Kabul, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has confirmed the desire of the United Nations to stabilize Afghanistan. Canada has engaged its political commitment and practical capabilities to rebuild security, democracy, human rights and prosperity in that country.

Canada believes that a united international community must support efforts to rebuild Afghanistan. International organizations, including the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the World Bank, must work towards that common goal. No one country can do that alone. To fully implement Security Council decisions, we must work in close partnership, both with the Government of Afghanistan and with our friends and allies.

(*spoke in French*)

To ensure a successful commitment, Canada deploys the necessary resources, as with our mission in Afghanistan. Under the terms of a clear United Nations mandate, Canada joined the coalition of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. More than 60 countries and international organizations

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have undertaken with us to help the democratically elected Afghan Government rebuild its country.

Canada believes that the efforts of the countries and organizations working in Afghanistan are commendable and also reflect the core principles espoused by the United Nations. The challenge is great, but the principles we are defending are greater still.

The countries assisting Afghanistan are united by a single conviction: there can be no reconstruction without security. Democracy and political stability cannot flourish in a climate of terror. Health care and education cannot be provided where anarchy prevails. Economic development is impossible when chaos is all around. Security is the crucial foundation on which everything depends, but long-term security requires sustainable investment in the country's development; one goes hand in hand with the other.

Thanks to the assistance of Canada and the international community, Afghanistan has made progress. Afghan police officers are currently being trained, Afghan refugees are returning home and Afghan children are learning to read and write. Canada is having a real and direct impact on the lives of the Afghan people and is contributing to the achievement of the vision of the future expressed in the Afghanistan Compact which was signed in 2006. In order to make that vision a reality, it is crucial that the United Nations and the Government of Afghanistan ensure the fulfilment of the Compact. And yes, despite the incidents of intimidation and violence, the situation of the Afghan people is improving.

(*spoke in English*)

Last year, Prime Minister Harper emphasized here that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan was the most important special political mission of the United Nations. The Canadian Government continues to support the leadership role of the United Nations in Afghanistan. For that reason, Canada supports having a new high-level United Nations special envoy for Afghanistan.

In the past year, our Government has demonstrated its multifaceted commitment to that mission. We have increased our development spending, our diplomatic presence and our military engagement. We welcome Security Council resolution 1776 (2007). It extends the authorization of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and calls on Member States to contribute personnel, equipment and funding. The Canadian Government encourages members of the Assembly to actively support that resolution and its implementation.

(*spoke in French*)

There are other challenges we must also meet. In Haiti, the Canadian Government has asked the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. That represents Canada's most substantial development programme and its largest stabilization mission in the Americas.

In Burma, it is imperative to restore democracy and human rights. We expect the United Nations to be at the forefront of those efforts. Although we have disagreed on occasion with the decisions and processes of the United Nations Human Rights Council, the convening of a special session of the Human Rights Council on Burma is an example of the sort of activism and engagement that Canada expects of that body, especially in dealing with countries that perpetuate human rights violations.

In the Sudan, innovative peacekeeping missions are creating a security framework which will become the foundation upon which a durable peace can be built. The international community must demonstrate the political will to find new solutions. Those solutions must be aimed not only at immediately ending the horrific violations of human rights occurring daily in Darfur, but also at addressing the issues of freedom and democracy that must form the foundation for a durable peace. Canada's substantial contribution to the Sudan continues in the form of humanitarian assistance and equipment. Of course, we condemn the intolerable attack against soldiers of the African Union force.

The scope of the challenges we must overcome to maintain our security is such that no country can hope to tackle them alone. We, the Member States, can and must show the determination and political will so that the United Nations may truly reflect the principles that its founders wanted it to embody.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada is and will remain a committed partner for all those who seek to work for freedom, to work for democracy and to work for human rights and the rule of law.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Raphael Tuju, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya.

Mr. Tuju (Kenya): It is my very great pleasure to address the General Assembly. I join other speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. My delegation has every confidence in your ability to discharge this challenge. I assure you of our support.

I commend your predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for ably steering the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I would also like to take this opportunity to once again congratulate the Secretary-General on his appointment. My delegation welcomes his commitment to strengthen the pillars of the United Nations: security, development and human rights.

Last year, when I had the privilege of addressing the Assembly, I dwelt on the issue of Somalia and how the dynamic in that country had an impact in our capitals and cities around the world, such as Toronto, Stockholm, Rome, Nairobi and Mogadishu. Even countries that are thousands of miles away and whose interaction with Somalia has been minimal have been forced to awaken to the reality that we have become a global village when their citizens plying international waters have been hijacked or robbed by pirates in the Indian Ocean along the coast of Somalia.

Let me thank the General Assembly and the Security Council for listening to our pleas from the region. I appeal for closer collaboration by the international community in addressing the complex and difficult problems of Somalia. Yet, within all these challenges, there are several windows of opportunity that we must take advantage of to prevent extreme human suffering, especially of women and children, in that sister country.

Mr. Romero-Martinez (Honduras), Vice-President, took the Chair.

My delegation commends the African Union for its support for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). We pay special tribute to the Ugandan troops for the important role they are playing in Somalia under very trying circumstances. We appeal for the deployment of the remaining peacekeeping troops to strengthen AMISOM. Kenya also urges the United Nations to assume greater responsibility in Somalia in line with Security Council resolution 1772 (2007). A United Nations presence on the ground in Somalia would complement regional and international efforts to promote peace, stability and reconciliation in that country.

Kenya unequivocally supports national reconciliation in Somalia. We see it as a process, not a single event. We urge all the political actors that hitherto boycotted the talks to embrace the process, because, no matter how long it takes, the final resolution of the Somalia crisis will only come about when all Somalis agree to sit down and talk. The region and the international community can only provide support. Ultimately, it is the people of Somalia who can resolve their difference through a spirit of give and take. For our part, as the international community, we must honour our pledges to provide the necessary resources to Somalia. The problem with Somalia may be less visible today, probably because it has been overshadowed by the conflict in Darfur, but the Somalia crisis is far from over.

According to the *Human Security Report 2005*, the number of armed conflicts in the world has fallen by over 40 per cent during the past 13 years. The report's overall conclusion that conflict is becoming less common in the world in general as well as in Africa is very encouraging. Conflict is a major disincentive to investment and poses an intolerable burden in terms of human suffering. The end of wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Southern Sudan is a welcome development in Africa.

While we may celebrate the end of those wars, it is imperative that the international community make the urgent and essential investments that will contribute to the prevention of recurrence of such conflicts. The local populations should experience peace dividends so as to sustain peace.

Kenya urges a strengthening of partnerships between the African Union and the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations in the area of political and technical cooperation, as well as partnerships with the continent's subregional organizations. The African Union's peacekeeping capabilities and capacity must be strengthened through provision of financial, technical and logistical support. The recent deaths of many African Union soldiers in Darfur underline the urgency of the need for logistical

support by the United Nations to African Union missions within the agreed-upon frameworks. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to provide assistance to the African Union to enhance its military capabilities and mediation role in conflict resolution.

The United Nations has deployed a lot of time and resources in the area of disarmament and development. The proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the Horn of Africa continues to undermine our security and development. It has contributed to making our neighbourhood a very tough one.

In order to address this challenge, the States of the region rallied together in 2000 to sign the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. The Declaration was upgraded in 2004 to a legally binding Protocol, the first intergovernmental instrument of its kind to address the proliferation of small arms. In 2005, the Protocol established the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA), with the main objective of providing a comprehensive framework to combat the availability of illicit small arms and light weapons in the region. In view of the importance of the Centre, Kenya has requested the inclusion of an item in the agenda of this session of the General Assembly to invite RECSA to participate in the work of the Assembly as an observer. Addressing the problem of the proliferation of small arms is important; we are up against the very powerful international vested interests of small arms manufacturers and traders.

Kenya was among the six sponsors of the draft resolution on the arms trade treaty that was overwhelmingly adopted during the last session of the General Assembly as resolution 61/89. In that resolution, the General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General, among other things, seek the views of Member States on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters for a legally binding arms trade treaty. We commend the Secretary-General for the progress made so far in the implementation of that resolution. We look forward to the establishment of a group of Governmental experts to begin work next year and to the group's report to the General Assembly at its next session.

I recently had occasion to address a group of my fellow Foreign Ministers from our close neighbour, Europe, on a couple of subjects that increasingly define our relationship with the rest of the world, among them illegal immigration. It is one of the ironies of history that there was a time when my brothers and sisters who were unlucky and could not run fast enough were caught as slaves and shipped across the oceans in very inhuman conditions. A large number died during the journey as they were sent to different parts of the world to provide slave labour.

Today, many of my brothers and sisters are often voluntarily offering themselves and handing over their life savings to be shipped across oceans in almost similar inhuman conditions. Many of them have lost their lives during the journey. They play cat and mouse, attempting to avoid border patrols equipped with tracer dogs and electronic monitoring, so as to get a chance to slave most of their lives in the minimum-wage bracket.

The clock has ticked full circle. But a lot has changed as well. And I come back to my assertion that distances between us have shrunk and we must now recognize that, in this global village, a phenomenon such as economic refugees is going to be a cause of trauma in our communities. You can build great walls, introduce and increase more menacing border patrols and make your immigration meaner, but the respite can only be temporary. You can whip up xenophobic sentiment, especially around national election times. But that amounts to an ineffectual Band-Aid and does not address the fundamentals of the crisis we are facing today.

Even in the most developed countries, unless a society addresses the problems and stress in the poor neighbourhoods and inner cities, any solution like migration into the suburbs and the construction of gated communities will only provide some temporary relief. Crime will continue unabated. Muggings, carjackings, kidnappings and other violent crime will continue to prevail. We have to address the fundamental problems in our poor neighbourhoods not just for the sake of those living in those neighbourhoods but also for the sake of those who live in relatively affluent areas.

What I am talking about is not really rocket science or some very complex social engineering concept. It should be clear to all of us that, in the

global village that we have come to be, it is in the interest of all of us to work together to address the conspiracy of factors that create so much stress and tension within and among our countries. We must be level-headed enough to recognize that angry unemployed young men in one country will spill over sooner or later into other countries' capitals and create problems.

If nothing else, the phenomenon of global climate change should teach us the lesson that our destinies as human beings are inextricably intertwined. Vehicular emissions in New York do the same thing to our village Earth as our cutting of equatorial forests in Africa to make charcoal. Both actions may introduce incidents of floods due climate change all the way over in distant China.

As neighbours in the global village, it is certainly a good thing if we both come to recognize that if wealthy countries' policies and actions confine us to abject poverty, then it is only a matter of time before the stress in my country will spill over into their neighbourhood — maybe in the form of illegal immigration, terrorism or whatever. However, sooner or later we all have to pay for the consequences of selfish and short-sighted policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

It is therefore important that as we talk about reform and paradigm shifts in any of these international institutions we should adopt the right attitude: that nobody is doing the other a favour. We are in this small boat called Earth together. When the powerful think that they are playing their advantage in the global scene and winning the battles, such victory can only be temporary. The only real victory is when it is a win-win outcome. The other outcome, when a large part of the world emerges as losers, is unsustainable. It breeds anger and vengeance.

Most of the resources and capacity to change our world for the better are domiciled in the developed world. The resources needed are more than enough in the more endowed countries. The knowledge of what we must do to make a positive difference is simple and evident. Yet as world leaders we must bear the collective guilt of failing to focus on providing the solutions.

I come from a country in a region, for example, where factors such as poverty and lack of education conspire to stress and destabilize our communities and countries. There is an autocatalytic relationship between poverty and low education. Those who have low education tend to become poorer. And those who are poorer tend to have low education. There is also a correlation between poverty and low formal education, on one side, and inter-ethnic, clan, religious and even racial tension, on the other side. This invariably leads to unstable societies.

When people are poor and less educated, their reference point tends to become only their ethnic, clan, religious or racial identity. With a few exceptions, the educated and affluent are at least able to operate at a higher level. A doctor, a lawyer, a teacher or an engineer is usually less xenophobic.

In Kenya, we understand this, and therefore we understand the importance of education. We have invested up to 30 per cent of our annual budget to provide free primary education. Next year, we will have free secondary education. That is the type of social and economic investment we all must make now if we expect to have a better, more prosperous and more stable world 10 years from now. We may make fine speeches and express a commitment to creating a safer, friendlier and more prosperous world. But as long as we fail to make the right investment in education and poverty alleviation, we are only engaged in empty talk.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are important medium- and long-term goals — 10 years in scope, usually. However, our democracies operate on a shorter calendar of four or five years. In both the developed and the less developed countries, many of the leaders tend to do what they must to survive and succeed in the next elections. Even with best of intentions, the nature and scope of the challenges of development that we must address cannot be adequately solved with official development assistance (ODA) programmes that are implemented and completed within the political calendar of changing regimes. We need more paradigm shifts and a longer-term vision in that regard.

In conclusion, many of our countries are now crashing under the weight of international debt. Those who have actually crashed are the ones that have been extended a parachute after they have crashed. I am amazed by this undertaker mentality.

I do not wish to blame the current generation of leaders in the developed countries for the status quo. I know that there is some financial and economic principle here. Most of the current leaders in these countries are innocent. The deals that were cut in the past, which put us in the kind of debt we are in today, are no longer in place. But I feel I must say that the load and the burden of our international debt is heavy and debilitating. A lot of it should not have been undertaken on in the first place; there is some complicity in the dishonesty on both sides that prevailed before we, today's leaders, came onto the scene.

It is important that today we secure the future of all our children, who must share this increasingly intertwined world. We must put behind us those negative things, such as the unjustified debts of the past, that can only breed anger and bitterness and affect future generations. We must make the sacrifices and the investment today for the future of humanity. That would be a favour to all of us, and not just to one group.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Basile Ikouebe, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and la Francophonie of the Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) (*spoke in French*): As he had to leave New York earlier than scheduled owing to pressing engagements, President Denis Sassou Nguesso has asked me to address the Assembly on his behalf in order to share with other Member States the perspectives of the Congolese Government on items on the General Assembly's agenda at this session.

On behalf of my delegation, I wish first to thank Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa of Bahrain for her excellent work. I also thank the President on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. The five priorities that he has articulated and the road map for climate change, the drafting of which he announced at his election, represent an agenda that is in line with the objectives that have been pursued by the United Nations since the Millennium Summit of September 2000. He can rely on my delegation's cooperation when we consider those issues.

To Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in his first experience of the General Assembly's general debate as Secretary-General, I reaffirm my Government's commitment to assisting him in the direction he seeks to set for our Organization. My country is sensitive to the many displays of interest in us that he has demonstrated time and time again since his election last year. Proof of that, inter alia, are the visit he made to Brazzaville in January 2007 and his choice of a son of our country, Mr. Rodolphe Adada, former Foreign Minister of the Congo, to direct the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). We are very grateful to him for that.

Following the violent crises that shook our nation in the late 1990s, the Congo has gradually found peace and stability through political dialogue and national reconciliation, which remain our ongoing objectives. The return of a number of Congolese who left the country during the civil wars is part of that positive trend. The legislative elections that have just been held peacefully are indeed the sign of a democracy at peace. That favourable dynamic needs, of course, to be encouraged, assisted and supported by the international community.

Despite enormous losses in human life and considerable material damage, at the end of the civil war the Congo was not considered to be a country in a post-conflict situation. We had to undertake at our own expense the vast task of restoration and reconstruction. We therefore plunged resolutely into difficult negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions to elaborate a programme of debt relief, implementation of the Millennium Development Goals — including the fight against poverty — and economic recovery. In that context, in order not to exacerbate further the daily existence of the majority of our people already living without the basic necessities, we are trying to prevent the negotiations from being an intolerable burden on them. We therefore hope to bring the negotiations to a conclusion as soon as possible so as not to delay the implementation of the necessary reforms.

The return to peace and stability has allowed my country to resume its place on the international stage. In less than three months, the Congo will end its term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. For the past 20 months, we have participated in the Council's deliberations in a constructive spirit. We have always favoured the resolution of disputes through peaceful means and dialogue, seeking compromise and enhanced multilateralism. Our participation has strengthened our belief in the need and urgency of reform of that main organ of the United

Nations, entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. Our position and that of Africa is well known on that question. We have also focused on improving the Council's working methods in order to ensure greater transparency and inclusiveness in its decision-making process.

During the presidency of the African Union assumed by Congolese President Denis Sassou Nguesso in 2006, the Congo had occasion to speak on behalf of a continent whose issues occupy the lion's share of the Council's agenda. We made the case for strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in order to ensure that the Council's decisions take the concerns of African countries into consideration and are thereby legitimate and viable. We called for ongoing dialogue between the Council, on the one hand, and the African Union, through its Peace and Security Council, and African States as a whole, on the other, as well as parties to conflicts.

We encouraged the international community to remain involved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including after the elections, which clearly represented a great step forward but left unresolved the questions of peace in the East, the disarmament of armed groups, the repatriation of foreign combatants and economic reconstruction. Such developments could be facilitated in the context of the pact signed at the conclusion of the second summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which is an appropriate regional framework.

In the Côte d'Ivoire, after much uncertainty, it is comforting to note that the process engaged by the Ouagadougou agreement has opened prospects for a resolution of the crisis, which we need to encourage and assist.

The same prospects for encouraging developments are now open to Darfur following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007). In his statement to the Council summit of 25 September, the Congolese Head of State called on the international community to seize this opportunity to act with a sense of urgency.

We must accelerate the pace of work in the following three areas, as emerged from the high-level meeting on Darfur held here in New York on 21 September. First, political dialogue is to resume on 27 October in Tripoli, where all parties must participate, bearing in mind the exceptional open-mindedness of the Sudanese Government, which has decided to observe a ceasefire once the Tripoli talks begin. Sanctions should be considered for all reticent parties. To encourage the initiative of political dialogue, which will determine any possible success for the international community's involvement in Darfur, my Government has decided to contribute to the special Trust Fund created by the Secretary-General to that end.

Secondly, peace must be maintained via the deployment of UNAMID. The creation of the force was a most significant decision that must be implemented without delay in order to avoid any political setback and any deterioration of the situation on the ground. In that area, too, my Government has demonstrated its solidarity by deciding to dispatch a contingent, along with the military observers it sent earlier as part of the African Union Mission in Sudan. In that regard, my delegation vigorously condemns the recent attack on the African Union peacekeepers in Haskanita in southern Darfur. We ask that the perpetrators be actively sought and punished.

Thirdly, humanitarian assistance and economic recovery are more than indispensable to stabilization and a return to normalcy in Darfur. With respect to African crises, we cannot ignore the tragedy of Somalia. As we all know, Africa has committed to deploying the Africa Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia, which should be vigorously supported and ultimately relieved by a United Nations force. Somalia must not become a forgotten crisis. The Somalis themselves, however, must assume their responsibilities and make a serious commitment to an inclusive political dialogue that will lead to genuine national reconciliation.

Until the end of this month, the Congo is the President of the Economic Community of Central African States. Our subregion has always been involved in international initiatives concerning the situations in its various constituent countries. A contingent put together by some of those countries is therefore contributing to the stability of the situation in the Central African Republic. The twenty-sixth meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Yaoundé on 7 September 2007, resulted in a series of

conclusions including, in particular, an appeal to the international community and the donors to help the Governments of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad secure their borders and improve general security conditions; support for the multidisciplinary operation to be deployed to secure the situation in the areas of Chad and the Central African Republic bordering the Sudan — the subject of Security Council resolution 1778 (2007), adopted on 25 September — and pursuing subregional cooperation on questions of security, including the announcement of the military exercise of a simulated peacekeeping operation, scheduled for Chad in November.

And finally, still in Yaoundé, on the margins of the meeting of the Advisory Committee, a ministerial conference on cross-border security questions in Central Africa resulted in the adoption of a statement, which amounts to a political commitment, by the States in the subregion to implement organizational, administrative, legal and technical mechanisms of cooperation in border areas. This will allow us to tackle such phenomena as uncontrolled or forced movement of populations, criminal activities of armed groups, illicit flows of small arms and light weapons and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

My country also remains vigilant to the threats that weigh on other parts of the world and crises that shake several regions around the globe. In this spirit, we have always supported a peaceful settlement to the Middle East conflict that takes into account the Quartet's Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative. We have also called for an international conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all countries in the region that can make a useful contribution. We therefore welcome with interest and hope the announcement of the November conference on the Middle East.

In terms of nuclear non-proliferation, we have always called for compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty in all its aspects, including the right of all countries to develop nuclear technology for civil purposes. We have always insisted on the crucial role of the International Atomic Energy Agency and on the need for a political dialogue with the countries whose nuclear programs raise questions. In this respect, we are pleased with the evolution of negotiations with North Korea, and we encourage pursuing dialogue with Iran to make sure that there is no slippage in the programme that country is developing.

My delegation is also pleased with the mobilization of the international community around a question crucial for the future of mankind: the real threat of climate change. Now, thanks to science, it has been clearly established that it is human activity that is at the origin of this scourge. We agree with the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly that the time has come to act. Therefore, we welcomed the high-level meeting held here on 24 September on this theme. The President of the Congo personally participated in that meeting to show the commitment of the countries of the Congo Basin — the world's second ecological lung, after the Amazon Basin — in the struggle for survival of our species and safeguarding the planet overall. On the basis of a strategic plan called the convergence plan, a ten-year plan, these countries have made a commitment to national and subregional actions having to do with sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the Basin.

The awareness that we have a responsibility in this common fight has led us to cooperate with the two other great forest areas — the Amazon and in Borneo — to promote better forestry and commercial practices. The talks that these three areas held on 24 September, on the margins of the high-level meeting, have permitted our delegations to prepare for a common approach to be presented at the conference of the States parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali this December.

Our constant commitment to peace and international security today includes many aspects. Climate change merits this special attention that this Assembly, as the world's conscience, must give to these great challenges confronting humanity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Reinaldo Gargano, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

Mr. Gargano (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate Mr. Srgjan Kerim on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

On behalf of my country, Uruguay, I would like to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and to all of those

who today are paying their respects and are celebrating this International Day of Non-Violence.

The Eastern Republic of Uruguay would like to begin by reiterating its ongoing commitment to the principles and guidelines which are and will continue to be at the very core of its international activity: the sovereign equality of States, the rejection of the use of force or the threat of the use of force, peaceful settlement of international disputes, attachment to and support for institutions of international law, support for international law itself, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, the self-determination of peoples, the promotion of human rights, international cooperation in economic and social matters, and support for multilateralism and for the quest for collective answers based on consensus and respect for law, and within the framework of the principles of the United Nations Charter — which means the rejection of any attempt to impose the will of one State over that of others.

Achieving these principles is sometimes impeded by the attitude of a few dominant States that impose illegitimate decisions, provoking conflicts that involve a large part of humankind and affect the weakest countries. But above all, they weaken the legal and political authority of the United Nations. It is clear today that lying behind those attitudes we can discern hegemonic economic interests.

In accordance with the suggestion of the President, we will address the proposed agenda, beginning with climate change.

At the High-level Dialogue here on 24 September, Uruguay expressed its opinions and referred to various aspects of this problem that lead to a serious and paradoxical situation for less developed countries: even though they do not contribute significantly to global warming, they are the ones that suffer the most and are the most vulnerable to its affects.

Regrettably, as we all know, there are highly industrialized countries responsible for emitting millions of tons of gas that cause global warming and climate change, which, however, do not seem ready to reduce their emissions nor to cooperate with the international community to compensate for these effects. We must call upon those countries to sign the Kyoto Protocol and to contribute, in a way that is proportionate to their responsibility in generating this problem, so that this struggle can be carried forward by all the nations of our planet in solidarity.

For basically agricultural and fishing countries such as Uruguay and many other undeveloped countries, climate is a decisive factor for development. The dramatic climate variations that are increasingly notorious constitute a serious threat for their possibilities for progress and the well-being of their populations. This is why our countries have affirmed that temporary aid and depending on the goodwill of rich countries when faced with specific catastrophes does not accomplish much. Rather, we need effective measures to be adopted from now on to prevent these catastrophes and commitments that are to be made now in order to avoid continuing to create the conditions that produce these catastrophes.

In considering the topic of financing for development, we should begin with the following question. What have been the causes of underdevelopment, economic and political dependency and poverty for billions of people, most of whom live in the southern part of the planet?

Looking for such financing, we tend to immediately think of financial organizations like the World Bank, or those which, in order to maintain budgets — that is, economic and social programmes — reflecting fiscal imbalances, have for decades prescribed economic formulas, such as those applied by the International Monetary Fund, which instead of leading to development have destroyed the productive apparatus of entire regions of the planet, thus generating unemployment, increasing poverty and concentrating wealth.

My country, along with other countries of the South American region, the Cairns Group and the Group of 22, has been saying for two decades that it is important to have just standards of trade rather than preaching about the unconditional opening of markets on the pretext of free trade while simultaneously practising the crudest and most ruthless protection of the world's predominant systems of production and stubbornly refusing to comply with part V of the Agreement on Agriculture, annexed to the Marrakesh Agreement, whose objectives include the elimination of subsidies and the opening up of markets. Unfortunately, we have not managed to convince the United States and the European Union of this.

To put it briefly and concisely, developing countries do not need to be "helped"; they need guarantees of free access to markets and, in particular, the elimination of domestic production subsidies, which violate the competitiveness guarantees, which are so highly touted. It is in agriculture that the southern countries are highly competitive and produce consumer goods of high quality, generally free of genetic modification. Real free trade would not make them turn to international credit and would enable them to generate their own resources to finance their own development, integrate their economies, to expand their markets, create their own multilateral credit institutions and diversify their products and, as a result, their markets.

Uruguay is the Chairman pro tempore of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and we firmly believe in the regional integration of all of the countries of South America. That is their strategic option in foreign policy.

Our South America possesses all of the natural resources that we find in the world; we have energy reserves for more than 100 years; we have the potential to produce food for 4 billion people; we have the largest global freshwater reserves; we have major mineral resources. Hence, we can make decisive economic and social progress, with a view to eliminating poverty.

But despite all of that, we face an absurd and criminal situation: out of 400 million people in South America, 200 million live under the poverty threshold; there are areas of the continent where there are extremely high rates of infant mortality. Life expectancy for part of that population is practically half of what it is in developed countries.

We cannot forget that in today's world South America is a factor of peace and political stability. All of the current Governments of South America have been democratically elected. Both in MERCOSUR and in its associated States, we have adopted the so-called democratic clause that says that a country can belong to these integration systems only if it respects democratic principles.

That is why, after 200 years of non-integration, we will tenaciously defend that achievement — so that anti-democratic and destabilizing interference will fail and so that the continent of hope, as we call it, can have an impact on the world to affirm peace and respect for international law, democratic stability, fundamental freedoms and human rights, which with great sacrifice these people have recovered after decades of a doctrine focusing on national security.

Uruguay reaffirms its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In order to achieve them, we need greater social justice, a better distribution of wealth and the gradual establishment of new criteria that would place the economy at the service of humankind instead of being a factor of slavery and poverty for a large part of humankind — a tool that is used for the excessive enrichment of privileged groups.

Our country knows the difficulties that all developing nations face in working towards those objectives. The current Uruguayan Government inherited a country that had experienced the worst crisis in its history, with levels of poverty affecting 1 million people out of a population of 3.5 million people; in tens of thousands of cases poverty reached the levels of abject poverty. All of this was the result of the application of a foreign economic model which was contrary to the interests of the region and its people.

Tackling this reality meant not only medium-term and long-term productive development measures, but also emergency social measures. Thus, in 2005 we implemented an emergency plan which in two years reduced the number of poor by 120,000, eliminated abject poverty and helped to socially reintegrate a large percentage of those who had been affected.

The Government is moving forward with a social equity plan, which involves the integration of more than 500,000 people — one seventh of the population — into the national health system, which is also being substantially modified. It also includes benefits of roughly $40 per month to all children who go to primary school and roughly $45 per month for those who attend secordary or technical school. All of this will help bring about a positive process of social inclusion.

Likewise, laws are being considered to transform the entire educational sector and which are also aimed at achieving the MDGs. At present, school is mandatory from the age of 4 and special attention is being paid to dealing with the problem of dropouts.

For Uruguay, no type of terrorism is acceptable or justifiable: neither State terrorism, which we

experienced during the 1970s and 1980s and which became a national security doctrine, nor the terrorism that is practiced by some groups to further their social, political, religious or other demands, claiming victims who, in the end, are always innocent people.

In the United Nations context, Uruguay is a party to all United Nations-system counter-terrorism conventions. We have submitted the relevant reports to all United Nations committees in this area.

Uruguay is concerned both by acts of terrorism and by their underlying causes. These include the promotion of hate based on cultural, political, racial or religious differences; the talk of a so-called inevitable clash of civilizations; military invasions; and the persistence of difficult conditions for part of populations living in occupied territories. Interventionism and non-compliance with United Nations resolutions to resolve conflicts are causing an increase in extremism and religious fanaticism among such peoples and seem to be the factors that have contributed most to the worsening and proliferation of terrorist attacks.

Uruguay calls for all cultures and peoples to come together in a respectful dialogue so that what is different or foreign will not be a reason for aggression, discrimination, subjugation or hatred. We fully support the initiative of Spain and Turkey: the Alliance of Civilizations.

In the view of Uruguay, peacekeeping in conflict zones is an essential mission not only of the United Nations, but also of all countries wishing to cooperate in building a safer world where peace and cooperation are the norm. Our country currently takes part in 12 of the 15 peacekeeping missions of the Organization deployed in Africa, America, Asia and Europe. Despite the fact that we have only 3.5 million people, we are the seventh largest troop contributor to those operations and we are the greatest per-capita troop contributor in the world.

Uruguay has acquired experience in matters linked to peacebuilding and reconstruction in areas devastated by conflict, and offers electoral assistance to States as well.

With respect to United Nations reform, Uruguay believes it is a priority to strengthen mechanisms to eliminate the resort to preventive wars, interventionism and unilateral actions that are undertaken without taking into account the opinion of the international community. Uruguay also expresses its full support for the new Human Rights Council, in which we have been honoured to serve as one of the Vice-Presidents. With respect to Security Council reform, we hope that in the current session we will be able to move forward on the basis of a consensus. Uruguay supports the inclusion of Brazil as a permanent member, as well as that of India, Germany and Japan, and an increase in the number of non-permanent members.

The effectiveness of the United Nations is a topic that concerns us. Uruguay is one of the countries that have been chosen for the "One United Nations" pilot plan, within the framework of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. The Government of Uruguay has committed itself to carrying out this pilot project in coordination with the United Nations agencies in Uruguay, defining three strategic areas as the basis of that coordination: State reform, especially in health, education and development strategies; decentralized development, with civic participation; and policies to eradicate poverty and structural inequities.

Lastly, Uruguay believes that all United Nations Member States must abandon patterns that date back to the Second World War and develop organizational standards for the General Assembly, the Security Council and the other principal organs of the United Nations. Member States should establish conditions that would bring the United Nations into the twenty-first century, thus guaranteeing peace and providing a forum in which to promote a dignified life for peoples along the axis of freedom, which is the basis for justice.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Norov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Norov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me, on behalf of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to welcome the participants in the General Assembly at its sixty-second session and wish this forum success in its work.

I am not mistaken if I say that the world community is looking forward to concrete results from the realization of the development goals formulated in the Millennium Declaration. A special role has been assigned to the United Nations in achieving the objectives set by the Declaration, including elaborating

fair and acceptable approaches to the issues of the access to, and use and distribution of, natural resources; maintaining environmental sustainability; combating transnational threats; and establishing a free, tolerant and stable developing world in the context of globalization.

One of the most serious problems of the present day is the reasonable use of natural resources and, above all, water and energy resources. Various and ambiguous approaches in this sphere hamper the process of development and lead to conflict situations and sometimes to ecological catastrophes. The fate of the Aral Sea may serve as an example. The receding of the Sea has tragic consequences not only for the peoples of Central Asia but also for the larger subregion and even all of Eurasia.

It is necessary to underscore that the major point is the use of resources and watercourses of transboundary rivers, which over the span of centuries have met the vital needs of States and peoples living along these rivers. The Republic of Uzbekistan believes that all decisions on the use of the watercourses of transboundary rivers, including the construction of hydropower facilities, must in no way inflict ecological damage or infringe upon the interests of the population of countries in the neighbouring territories.

The Convention on the Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context of February 1991, the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes of March 1992, and the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses of 1997 directly point to the reasonable use of transboundary river resources. Those Conventions require that transboundary waters be used in a reasonable and equitable way, taking into particular account their transboundary character, in the case of activities that have or are likely to have a transboundary impact.

In the case of the infliction of damage, all measures must be taken to repair or mitigate such damage, and, if necessary, the issue of compensation is to be considered. It is underscored in United Nations Conventions that the watercourse States shall cooperate on the basis of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, mutual benefit and good faith. According to those fundamental requirements of the Conventions, authoritative international experts must give guarantees that the construction of hydrotechnical facilities will not have irremediable ecological consequences and will not throw off the established balance of the use of watercourses of transboundary rivers by all States located in the basin of those rivers.

We are convinced that those requirements must be fulfilled in the implementation of various projects building hydropower facilities in Central Asia with the participation of both national and transnational companies, so as not to allow for a catastrophic deterioration of the ecological situation in the region. We would like to remind investor countries who have expressed a wish to participate in the implementation of such projects of those conditions.

The current situation in Central Asia demonstrates the interlinking of many contradictory processes, which could negatively influence security not only in our region, but also far beyond its limits. Uzbekistan has consistently supported the effective post-war recovery of Afghanistan. We strongly believe that stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan should be accomplished not through militarization, but through demilitarization, the resolution of outstanding social and economic problems and support to the country's population through the active participation and assistance of the world community. Certainly, the most important conditions for that are the reaching of a consensus, the taking of coordinated measures by all parties interested in stabilizing and reviving Afghanistan and curbing the ever-present drug threat that emanates from that country.

The matter of shaping and promoting an ideology of tolerance, mutual understanding and cultural diversity has taken on a special urgency in the context of maintaining peace and security at the regional and global levels. The Republic of Uzbekistan makes its own contribution to the support of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations, which must be maintained in the framework of international law without strain or pressure, without attempts to impose unacceptable values and moral norms and by preserving respect for peoples, thought processes which have been shaped over many centuries and millennia. The correctness of such an approach was particularly stressed during the international conference on Uzbekistan's contribution to the development of Islamic civilization, held in Uzbekistan in August 2007, and attended by prominent

scholars, theologians and government and public figures from different parts of the world.

The designation by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization of Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, as a world capital of Islamic culture represented the recognition of the role and significance of Uzbekistan in Islamic civilization. Uzbekistan has for centuries been a centre of enlightened Islam, which seeks to strengthen in the consciousness of people such eternal values as the aspiration towards kindness and peace, tolerance in inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations, and mutual respect and accord among peoples, regardless of the colour of their skin or their beliefs. That is why we are seriously concerned about some negative interpretations of the historical role of Islam and the deliberate distortion of historical facts. We resolutely oppose the transformation of counterterrorism into Islamophobia and into an overt or covert stand-off with the Islamic world.

In such circumstances, the role of the United Nations is more important than ever before in encouraging and promoting cultural diversity, tolerance and mutual understanding among religions. In that context, Uzbekistan welcomes the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace to be held on 4 and 5 October.

In conclusion, I wish to express the sincere hope that the results of the work of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session will promote the successful realization of the joint efforts of Member States to address challenges and threats to global security, as well as the further peaceful development of the world's nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Maldives.

Mr. Shahid (Maldives): Allow me at the outset to extend to Mr. Kerim my delegation's warmest congratulations on his election to preside over the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. His election to that high office is a tribute to his wisdom and skill, as well as a true reflection of the important role played by his country in the international arena. I assure him of my delegation's full cooperation in his work.

At the same time, allow me to place on record my delegation's profound gratitude and appreciation to his predecessor, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for the commendable manner in which she guided the work of the sixty-first session.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his dedication and leadership. The Maldives pledges its full support for the Secretary-General's untiring work in promoting the noble principles of this Organization.

It is indeed a privilege for me to address the General Assembly on this historic day, when the United Nations is observing the International Day of Non-Violence. On this day, we pay special tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest men of all times.

The Maldives has always been a country which has promoted peace, non-violence, tolerance and human rights. However, the spectre of terrorism visited the Maldives this past weekend. On Saturday afternoon, an improvised explosive device was detonated in the commercial area of our capital, Malé, injuring 12 innocent bystanders. That unprovoked attack was the first of its kind in our history. I would like to extend our sincere sympathies to those who were injured and to their families.

The Maldives is a country renowned for its tranquillity and warm welcomes. Our people are united in shock and outrage that this happened on our soil. That shock is matched by a determination that such cowardly acts of aggression will not be allowed to undermine or jeopardize the maintenance of our peaceful and harmonious society. On behalf of the people of the Maldives, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our many friends in the international community for their expressions of support and solidarity. I would particularly like to thank those countries that have provided us with their expertise, technical advice and assistance in the ongoing investigations. Finally, I would like to commend the work of our domestic law enforcement and other agencies that have reacted to the incident with such speed and professionalism. The incident serves as a reminder that no State is immune from the scourge of terrorism. The Maldives utterly condemns all acts of terrorism, wherever they are perpetrated.

The Maldives, as a low-lying small island State, is particularly vulnerable to the perils of global climate

change, a point brought sharply into focus by the recent sea swells that submerged a large part of the country. For the past 20 years, the Maldives, along with its partners in the Alliance of Small Island States, has thus been at the forefront of efforts to bring the issue of climate change and its devastating impact on small island developing States to the world's attention.

Addressing this Assembly in 1987 at the high-level debate on environment and development, the President of the Republic of Maldives, Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, said:

> "The profound dilemma of environmental transition is a global one, and its implications are worldwide and long-term. Though the Maldives and other low-lying archipelagic nations may have to suffer the most immediate and the most extreme effects of a global sea-level rise, there is a potential danger to a significant portion of the world's population in the near future ... No one nation, or even a group of nations, can alone combat the onset of a global change in environment."

Since that ground-breaking debate, the international community has convened numerous conferences and summits at which it has agreed on a wide range of plans and programmes of action aimed at addressing global climate change. However, as a community of nations we must regretfully concede that, all too often, the reality of implementation has failed to match the ambitions of rhetoric.

Twenty years on, greenhouse gas emission levels are continuing to increase unabated and the consequences of global warming are becoming ever more apparent. One can only therefore conclude that the past 20 years have been an era of missed opportunities.

Despite those stark facts, last week's high-level debate on climate change has once again given us some hope and encouragement. As a result of a palpable change in world opinion, there is now a real sense of international momentum leading towards December's crucial Conference in Bali. We believe that the Conference offers us a chance to overcome the failed promises and missed opportunities of the past, and to build a new global consensus on climate change.

We must take collective responsibility and agree to an integrated and comprehensive approach to climate change that recognizes and covers all four pillars of climate change policy — mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer and funding. While the necessary steps are clear, the crucial question, as always, is whether the international community has the political will to undertake those steps; to build on the commitments entered into in Rio, Kyoto, Johannesburg, New York and elsewhere; and to secure a successful outcome from the Bali process.

I can assure the Assembly that the Maldives will play its part in this process. I am happy to announce here today my Government's intention to host a preparatory meeting for the Alliance of Small Island States in the Maldives in November. The purpose of this meeting is to draft a collective stand on the individual human dimension of climate change for submission to the Bali Conference.

The Asian tsunami of 2004 represented the worst natural disaster in the history of the Maldives. The economic damage and losses alone were equivalent to almost two thirds of the country's gross domestic product. Although much remains to be done to complete the process of recovery, a considerable amount has already been achieved. We need the continued support of our development partners and the international community to overcome the challenge of tsunami recovery.

The devastating tsunami threatened to derail the Maldives in its attempts to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and our planned graduation from the list of least developed countries (LDCs).

Despite the tsunami, the Maldives continues to make strong progress towards the attainment of the MDGs. The Maldives has already achieved Goal 1, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, and Goal 2, the achievement of universal primary education. We are also on course to meet Goals 4, 5 and 6 on reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating communicable diseases, respectively. Consolidating and strengthening progress towards all the MDGs is a key focus of the recently launched seventh national development plan.

Buoyed by these successes, the Maldives will next year begin its transition period for graduation from LDC status. For the Maldives, graduation represents a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is recognition of the startling economic and social

development that the country has enjoyed over the past 30 years. On the other hand, graduation will bring with it a range of new challenges. For example, we will enjoy less favourable trading conditions and reduced levels of development assistance. Adapting to this new reality will not be easy. In that regard, I would like to use my speech today to once again urge our international partners to assist us in making the transition as smooth as possible.

Next year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Maldives Government is determined to mark the occasion by completing the country's current reform agenda, an ambitious programme of reforms designed to strengthen individual rights and freedoms, ahead of multiparty elections under a new Constitution.

Since the start of the reform agenda in 2004, the Maldives has made remarkable strides in the field of human rights. An independent Paris Principles-compliant Human Rights Commission has been established. The Maldives has acceded to the two major human rights covenants — on civil and political rights, and on economic, social and cultural rights. Later today I will sign, on behalf of the Government, the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, meaning that the Maldives will have signed or ratified eight of the nine core human rights treaties. Last year, the Maldives also became the first country in Asia to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

However, the Government readily concedes that much more needs to be done. Therefore, the Government is proceeding in its work in close cooperation with international human rights bodies. For example, last year, the Maldives became one of the few countries to extend a standing invitation to visit the country to all United Nations human rights special rapporteurs. In addition, earlier this year, the Government invited the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to appoint a national human rights adviser to the Maldives.

The Maldives reiterates its support for the right of the Palestinian people to an independent homeland. We therefore call on the international community, led by the Quartet, to revive the peace process as a matter of urgency.

The Maldives also calls on the international community to continue and intensify its efforts to bring peace and stability to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Maldives also reiterates its steadfast opposition to the development, proliferation or use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Strengthening and revitalizing the United Nations to take on the new and emerging challenges of the twenty-first century remains an important task. We are encouraged by the progress that has been made in implementing the wide-ranging United Nations reform programme over the past two years. We sincerely believe, however, that these reforms cannot fully succeed without the much-needed and concurrent reform of the Security Council. Maldives firmly believes that an effective multilateral framework is fundamental for the security of small States and that such a framework should take into consideration modern geopolitical realities.

In this regard, the Maldives reiterates its support for the Group of Four (G-4) draft resolution on Security Council reform. We hope, therefore, that we will be able to make progress on Security Council reform during this session.

Before I conclude, please allow me to reaffirm our commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to offer our full support to its continuing work for the betterment of humanity and for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Sonatane Tu'a Taumoepeau-Tupou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga.

Mr. Taumoepeau-Tupou (Tonga): At the outset, I offer my congratulations to Mr. Srgjan Kerim on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. Let me assure him of the Kingdom of Tonga's cooperation, and of every confidence that the sixty-second session of the General Assembly will be productive and successful under his very able leadership. I also wish to commend Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain for her dedication in guiding the work of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban

Ki-moon, and to assure him of Tonga's support during his tenure in office.

As the United Nations advances well into its sixty-second year, we can ask ourselves how we have fared in the stewardship of our world. Have we passed the test or have we been found wanting? The plethora of outstanding issues, unfulfilled commitments, and new and evolving global challenges reaffirms the relevance of the United Nations as the only multilateral institution that can appropriately deal with these complex global issues.

The year 2007 marks the halfway point towards the target date for accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were endorsed by world leaders as a road map to a better world by the year 2015. As the President rightly observed, "[a]chieving the MDGs is not solely a test of our ability to deliver on our promises; it is, above all, a test of our moral obligations and the values that are enshrined in the Charter" (*A/62/PV.1*).

The process of an annual ministerial review of progress made in the implementation of development goals and targets, which commenced this year, provides us with a tool to gauge progress at the national level and bring into focus outstanding issues to be addressed, as well as highlighting positive experiences and best practices that can be replicated by Member States. In addition, the President's proposal to hold a MDG leaders meeting during the sixty-second session is very welcome.

Any meaningful discussion of the MDG cannot be had without also referring to financing for development. Since the landmark agreement endorsed in Monterrey in 1992, the scorecard has been mixed. While considerable advances have been made in some areas, stagnation or retrogression has been experienced in others. One such area is in the fulfilment of commitments by developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for overseas development assistance by 2015. Tonga joins others in calling on donor countries that have not fulfilled their obligations to recommit themselves to meeting the targets by 2015. We also look forward to a positive outcome in the forthcoming High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development to be held later this month as a lead-up to the Follow-up International Conference in Doha, Qatar, in 2008.

Tonga has emphasized in other forums that, in order to achieve the MDGs, it is also imperative that affordable, clean and efficient energy be available to all through improved access to reliable and affordable energy services. Technical and financial support, however, is required to ensure that the poor derive tangible benefits from public investment in the energy sector.

The central theme selected for the general debate, responding to climate change, is of particular relevance to small island developing countries, including Tonga. Climate change is not regarded as just an environmental issue, since it has implications for economic growth, sustainable development and the achievement of the MDGs. Tonga commends the Secretary-General for his laudable initiative to hold the recent high-level dialogue, which infused political momentum and set the stage for the Bali Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in December 2007. Tonga supports the view that negotiations must be advanced towards a global and comprehensive agreement on a post-2010 framework to limit global emissions to avoid dangerous climate change. It is important, therefore, that this process be completed by 2009.

Tonga further supports the position that the essential parameters of such a global framework should include the following items: enhanced leadership by the industrialized countries on emission reductions; incentives for developing countries to act, but without sacrificing economic growth or poverty reduction, and in a manner fully consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; significantly increased support for adaptation in developing countries, especially the least developed countries and small island developing States; and strengthened technology development and dissemination, with new approaches to financing, including better use of market-based approaches.

The threat of terrorism continues to be real, and it is a complex global issue. Following the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288) in September 2006, success will be guaranteed only if the Strategy is fully implemented. Tonga looks forward to positive progress leading to the finalization of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

As regards peacekeeping operations, we are all witnessing a surge in the demand for peace operations, with over 100,000 personnel currently serving in the field. It is also projected that there will be a further increase in numbers as new and expanded missions are approved. This development will certainly provide a major operational challenge to the institution. Tonga remains committed to supporting international peacekeeping efforts where we are requested to provide such assistance and in keeping with the policy of my Government. We commend the contributions of United Nations peacekeepers in fulfilling the role of helping parties to end hostilities.

Tonga supports the ongoing work on the reform agenda of the United Nations and commends the commitment by the Secretary-General to breathe new life and inject renewed confidence into a strengthened United Nations firmly anchored in the twenty-first century, and effective, efficient, coherent and accountable. On the outstanding issue of Security Council reform, we need to remind ourselves of our commitment in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) to early reform of the Council. Tonga looks forward to the forthcoming intergovernmental negotiations and anticipates that the process will provide the necessary impetus for decisive action to bring closure to the issue.

On the question of Taiwan, Tonga is of the view that maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States and non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States are among the cardinal principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Thus, Tonga continues to adhere to the one-China policy, recognizing Taiwan as an integral part of China.

Regional integration and cooperation are vital for small island developing countries of the Pacific in view of their remoteness, small size and narrow economic base. The Pacific Plan is currently in its second year of implementation; it focuses on four overlapping pillars, including economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security. In this regard, Tonga commends the Secretary-General for attaching importance to strengthening United Nations cooperation with our regional organizations. Tonga continues to support the process of regional cooperation and looks forward to hosting the thirty-eighth annual Pacific Islands Leaders Forum in Nuku'alofa later this month.

After 10 years of negotiations, the World Trade Organization (WTO) welcomed Tonga on 27 July 2007 as the 151st member of the organization. As a small island developing nation, there are many challenges and obstacles to gaining full benefit from the global trading system, including productive capacity and infrastructure. It is, therefore, imperative that the Doha development Round negotiations be concluded expeditiously, with a meaningful development package, including the elimination of all export subsidies, improved market access and enhanced special and differentiated treatment. Last year, we urged the donor community to move forward with the delivery of "aid for trade" independent of the Doha Round. In this regard, we wish to commend our donor partners for the effort to improve the delivery of aid for trade in Asia and the Pacific to ensure that countries take full advantage of the open global market in the lead-up to the WTO global aid for trade review that will be held later this year.

Tonga continues to advocate for labour mobility as a vehicle for achieving its pro-poor strategies. Earlier this year, the New Zealand Government instituted a seasonal labour programme for agricultural workers from five kick-start countries in the Pacific, including Tonga. We view this as an important and positive step towards wider acceptance of this type of model by developed countries as an option for resolving seasonal labour shortages.

Our Legislative Assembly this year passed a law that allows dual citizenship. The new law gives due recognition to the large number of Tongans residing overseas, their significant contribution to the economy and their desire to still have links to their homeland.

Last year at this rostrum, we provided a brief synopsis of the state of play in the process leading to the greater democratization of Tonga's political system. Regrettably, while the report of the National Committee on Political Reform was being deliberated by the Legislative Assembly, the supporters of one of the three models of reform rioted, burned and destroyed 80 per cent of the central business district, which resulted in the loss of eight lives. In a matter of a few hours, the tally of the damage incurred equated to a loss of 20 per cent of the gross domestic product. A state of emergency was subsequently declared by the Government, initially for a one-month period, but has by necessity and by demand been continuously extended to prevent any further civil disturbance.

In our hour of need, Tonga sought the support of its neighbours New Zealand and Australia to assist local police in establishing order. They responded promptly and appropriately with the deployment of military and police personnel. Within a period of two weeks, the role played by our friendly neighbours, as well as by the Tonga Defence Services and the Tonga Police Force, provided security and law and order for the country.

A reconstruction committee under my chairmanship is coordinating the reconstruction of Nuku'alofa Township. Government, however, is fully committed to bringing all of the perpetrators of that horrendous event to full accountability for their actions, and the court cases are ongoing. At the same time, efforts are in progress on a process of national reconciliation.

A tripartite select committee of the Legislative Assembly was also established to review the political reform agenda. The report of the tripartite committee was recently tabled to the Legislative Assembly, where a timetable was approved for the full implementation of political reform by 2010.

We seek the understanding and support of the international community as we continue with the healing of the wounds through the national reconciliation process, the rebuilding of the central business district, as well as the transition into a more democratic political system that is relevant to the economic, social and cultural architecture of the nation.

It has been emphasized time and again that what is needed in the United Nations is to close the gap between rhetoric and actions. There has been much rhetoric and commitment, but the world will not judge us on rhetoric. The world will judge us on our outputs and on what we deliver. Let us face up to our responsibility, fulfil our promises so as to equate rhetoric with action, and show the people whose lives will be impacted by the decisions we make in this Hall that we can be trusted to deal effectively with global issues that require global solutions.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Timothy Harris, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Harris (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I have the honour to address the General Assembly at its sixty-second session on behalf of the Government and people of the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

I extend heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Kerim and his country, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. I assure him of my delegation's full cooperation as he endeavours to chart the course of positive interaction and coordination in this international arena.

I would also like to welcome the new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who is assisting at his first general debate of the General Assembly as Secretary-General. My delegation supports him in his all-too-important task of managing the affairs of the United Nations.

Small island developing States such as Saint Kitts and Nevis rely on the United Nations to level the playing field in international discourse so that we can interact, contribute and benefit on an equal footing with other members of the international community.

Twenty-four years ago, Saint Kitts and Nevis took the bold step of joining this body. We pledged then to do all in our power to pursue peace, security, human rights and development. Twenty-four years later, my beautiful country can boast that it has kept faith with our people and the international community. It has achieved much, and the pace and nature of its development set an example for other small island developing States.

Today, the human development index of the United Nations Development Programme ranks us fifty-first out of 177 countries evaluated in the world. Saint Kitts and Nevis has indices on per capita gross domestic product, health and educational enrolment comparable to those of many in the developed world. Pleased as we are with our progress, we are all too aware that the journey is not yet ended. Much work needs to be done. Poverty in our Federation and in the Caribbean is still at an unacceptable level, and the turbulence of the global climate vitiates our continuing development.

We are almost at the mid-point of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). If we were to evaluate ourselves as a whole, we would have to acknowledge that many of the

commitments have not been met. Aid has fallen off, official development assistance has been limited, and we have seen competing initiatives divert the drive of fulfilling the MDGs. Today, Saint Kitts and Nevis calls upon all States, be they in the North, South, East or West, developed or developing, to do all in their power to ensure the realization of the fruits of our united vision that proposed the Millennium Development Goals.

United Nations Member States are not all equal in endowments. Those that have more resources must allocate more to the global development agenda. The developed world must meet its financing commitments, as agreed at the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development. That Conference represents a landmark because, for the first time, the developed world agreed that we were jointly responsible for development and that it had a special role in financing for development. That commitment, regrettably, has not been matched by real resources.

The United Nations will hold a follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development. The State of Qatar has generously offered to host that meeting. We applaud that country for its commitment to the cause and we again call upon all countries to implement the commitments they made at Monterrey.

Saint Kitts and Nevis acknowledges that the HIV/AIDS pandemic constitutes a threat to our development and, indeed, our security. Prime Minister Denzil Douglas, in his capacity as Caribbean lead spokesman for health and human and social development has often stated that this matter requires serious and dedicated monitoring and action.

The fight to eradicate the scourge of HIV/AIDS must continue, and we must dedicate ourselves to that task. No matter the merits and demerits of the debate concerning issues in relation to intellectual property rights, the evidence has shown that only with cheaper antiretroviral drugs can the HIV/AIDS pandemic at the minimum be managed and its threat to humankind reduced. Therefore, there is a need to address the issues related to the cost of these drugs so that they can be available to all who need them.

The book of Genesis reminds us that man was made to coexist peacefully with his environment. The planet Earth is not an inheritance; rather, it is a loan from our children and grandchildren, who hope that one day we will return to them a clean and wholesome Earth. We must be careful, then, that our production and consumption patterns and behaviours do not surpass the environment's capacity to sustain them.

The matter of climate change is of continuing and great interest to my Government. Indeed, we view the associated problems of the high frequency of abnormal weather, sea level rise, global warming and coastal degradation as matters affecting the economic and environmental security of small States such as Saint Kitts and Nevis. We are indeed heartened by the priority being accorded to this matter by the new Secretary-General.

This year, Saint Kitts and Nevis signed the Kyoto Protocol, which signalled my country's commitment to doing all that it can to reduce its carbon emissions. We urge other States to sign the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

Indeed, Saint Kitts and Nevis will never shirk its responsibilities as a global citizen. We believe that global environmental management and multinational efforts could resolve many issues — particularly at this time, when all of us have experienced environmental deterioration. We call on developed countries to provide greater support to small island developing States in combating the adverse effects of climate change. In addition, we urge far greater South-South cooperation on the important matter of climate change.

We live at a time when disasters are occurring with a rapidity not previously felt. Within CARICOM, we felt the impact of the passage of Hurricane Dean, during which lives were lost, livelihoods were threatened and, in the case of Jamaica, an election was postponed. That same hurricane moved on to wreak havoc in Mexico and was followed very closely by other, equally destructive hurricanes.

Over the past year, nearly every region of the world has endured some form of natural or man-made disaster. My delegation believes, therefore, that we need an increase in humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. No country escapes the need for such assistance. In addition to supporting the existence and the role of the Central Emergency Response Fund, we encourage Member States to commit to that and similar initiatives.

I now turn to United Nations reform. During the course of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, the issue of reform of the United Nations and, in particular, system-wide coherence received extensive attention. Saint Kitts and Nevis believes that reform is necessary. My delegation's position, therefore, is that the time has come for agreement on the issue and on the way forward. We need continued dialogue, of course. But, most important, Member States need to agree on a plan of action and its implementation, as well as on the need to get on with the job. If we do not agree, or if we remain inflexible regarding one another's concerns, we will all be at a disadvantage. Therefore, the dialogue among civilizations must continue, and implementation must occur, if true reform of all aspects of the United Nations is to come to fruition.

The United Nations must remain open to membership for all States. In that regard, experience has shown that United Nations membership is not a deterrent to unification; consider, for example, the former East Germany and West Germany. Nor is it a panacea for fragmentation, as some have argued, citing the deconstruction of the former Soviet Union. What has always been clear is that the United Nations has extended a warm welcome to all States and respected the equality of all States.

In the context of the principle of universality, my country renews its call for Taiwan to become a Member of the United Nations. It is of grave concern that the 23 million people of Taiwan have been denied the right to participate in the United Nations and its related bodies. During the sixty-first session, that exclusion and isolation were pursued even more aggressively.

We, the friends of Taiwan, implore the United Nations family to recognize that the people of Taiwan are a disenfranchised people. Many of us were once also disenfranchised and unrepresented; but, through international recognition of our inalienable right to participate, we are here today. My delegation wishes to see the same right enjoyed by the people of Taiwan.

Taiwan has shown that it can be a true partner in development. In our view, the international community has been deprived of the gift of that partnership at a time when Taiwan's assistance could have been so useful to many States in meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

In March of this year, the United Nations observed the bicentenary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. My Prime Minister, the Honourable Mr. Denzil Douglas, had the distinct honour of addressing this body on behalf of CARICOM. One of the significant results of the commemoration exercise has been an acknowledgement that the injustice of slavery still exists in one form or another and that there is a need to address that problem. Child slavery and economic slavery impact the societies of the international community, and we need to mobilize our collective resources to combat those scourges. Only when that has been accomplished will we be able to feel that the battle waged more than 200 years ago to abolish the trans-Atlantic slave trade and all elements associated with it has been won.

Finally, as we look ahead to the rest of the sixty-second session, I wish to reiterate my country's pledge of cooperation, commitment and dialogue to address the many challenges that we will encounter in ensuring that the United Nations remains the relevant forum for international relations. The United Nations must continue to be a beacon of hope for countries in search of peace, self-determination, respect for human rights, progress, development and, very important, justice. It is not too late for this body to go and enchant the world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Djibril Yipènè Bassolet, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Bassolet (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to express our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Srgjan Kerim on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. I am convinced that, thanks to his skill as an experienced diplomat, he will ably carry out his mandate. He can count on the cooperation of the delegation of Burkina Faso. I should also like to express our deep gratitude to his predecessor, Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, for the ability with which she led the work of the sixty-first session.

I would like, finally, to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, who has shown, in the less than a year that he has been at the head of this Organization, his full-fledged commitment to peace and development and his firm determination to pursue

the ambitious work of modernizing the United Nations bequeathed to him by his predecessor, Mr. Kofi Annan.

As I speak to this Assembly, Burkina Faso has had floods this year, which have bereaved many families in all regions of the country. The dozens of death, the thousands of homeless people and displaced persons, the food crisis and the subsequent epidemics have implications above and beyond the statistics — the heavy price that a country, such as Burkina Faso, pays for global warming and all other phenomenon linked to climate change. It is my hope that the conclusions of the important summit on climate change held here on 24 September will promote the adoption of appropriate and urgent measures that will shield our populations from this type of scourge.

All types of tension are shaking the world and, in particular, the African continent, which gives us reasons to welcome the role played by our Organization in the search for and strengthening of peace and peacebuilding. Burkina Faso, which is the Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), is mindful that no sustainable development can be contemplated without an environment of peace and stability and has made conflict resolution a key thrust of its diplomacy.

Therefore, President Compaoré has made a resolute commitment as facilitator to search for solutions to the crises that have affected the fraternal and neighbouring countries of Togo and Côte d'Ivoire. The Inter-Togolese Dialogue, which led in August 2006 to the signing in Lomé of a comprehensive political agreement. The agreement is bearing fruit, which pleases all those concerned. The latest session of the follow-up committee, which was held in Ouagadougou in August 2007, noted the conclusion of the electoral roll revision process and the setting of a date for legislative elections on 14 October 2007.

Prospects are encouraging in Togo and, on behalf of President Compaoré, facilitator of the Inter-Togolese Dialogue, I can confirm the sincere will and the real commitment of the people and the political class of Togo to get their country out of this crisis and to create the best conditions conducive to reconstruction, growth and development. And, in thanking the international community for their assistance, I would call on them to pursue their action for institutional reforms, peacebuilding and economic development in Togo.

In the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, thanks to the Ouagadougou Political Accord, signed on 4 March 2007 by President Gbagbo and the Secretary-General of the Forces Nouvelles Guillaume Soro, the end of hostilities is now a reality. And so we should commend and encourage them to persevere to a final peace in Côte d'Ivoire. The facilitator of the direct dialogue in the Ivorian crisis, President Compaoré, who is President of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS at this time, is please to see all of the political class and the entire population of Côte d'Ivoire joining in the Ouagadougou Accord. This Accord translates the will of the parties to proceed with identifying people for an electoral enumeration and to organize a free, open and transparent presidential election. The Security Council, in its resolution 1765 (2007), has endorsed this Accord.

I would like to express our appreciation to the United Nations, which has supported Burkina Faso in its efforts to establish peace and security, particularly in West Africa. In deciding to be a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, for the period of 2008-2009, Burkina Faso hopes to make its contribution to the triumph of a world of justice and peace over the current world, where exclusion, intolerance and frustrations generate violent acts of despair. At this time, I would like to reiterate our thanks to the member States of the ECOWAS and the African Union (AU) who decided to make the candidacy of Burkina Faso an African candidacy. Our hope is that all Members of this Organization will give us their trust. We will be worthy of it.

Burkina Faso remains concerned by situations of tension and conflict in Africa and throughout the world. We welcome the decision of the Security Council to deploy a hybrid United Nations-African Union force in Darfur (UNAMIS). Burkina Faso has decided to participate in it, as we have done in a number of other theatres of operation. I would call upon the international community to give peace a chance in the Sudan by giving this hybrid force the logistical and financial resources necessary for accomplishing their mission. As for the protagonists, they will have to do everything they can to make the upcoming talks an important milestone in the process of national reconciliation and in bringing peace to the country.

We also think about the persistence of conflicts in Somalia and between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The

Saharan zone, which includes the north of Mali and Niger, has also been hit by armed conflict. Burkina Faso has expressed its solidarity to those two neighbouring countries and hopes that durable solutions will allow for peace to be re-established and will allow for the promotion of socio-economic development.

We are pleased about the political developments in Sierra Leone, a country which has just had great success in organizing free, democratic and transparent general elections. This is the most recent illustration that democracy and good governance are gradually taking root in Africa. Throughout the continent, this principle of good governance is part of the political agendas.

We also congratulate the Moroccan Government for having initiated direct talks with the Polisario Front on the future of the Western Sahara. By this direct dialogue the two parties are, together, proving their ability to look for a mutually beneficial political solution. We would strongly encourage them to do so, convinced as we have always been that only a negotiated, political solution will put an end to this conflict.

Because it is at the heart of any lasting peace in the region and throughout the world, the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must remain an absolute priority for our Organization. In this respect, it has been established that the only solution is the creation of a Palestinian State that is viable with secure and internationally recognized borders alongside a State of Israel that is also certain of its security. And this is now where all efforts should be focused.

In welcoming the existence of nuclear-weapon-free zones, Burkina Faso is also calling for a responsible, just and equitable approach to the so-called nuclear crises. My delegation is very much concerned by the proliferation and the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which for the victims are truly weapons of mass destruction. In West Africa, the phenomenon is particularly disturbing and its eradication requires sustained cooperation among States, as well as significant support on the part of the international community. Burkina Faso, which is the Chair of ECOWAS, has decided to make a priority of this issue.

The West African region is also in the process of becoming a key centre of drug trafficking. That situation requires urgent and appropriate action on our part, since it is likely to destabilize States, particularly by disrupting their economies and increasing the level of organized crime and corruption. Therefore, we call for solidarity and support from the international community to help us eradicate this scourge as swiftly as possible.

Those worrisome issues will certainly be on the agenda of the conference on peace and security in West Africa and the role of the joint European Union-Africa strategy which my country will host in November 2007. A joint initiative of the Republic of Austria and Burkina Faso, that important meeting will be an opportunity to identify the underlying causes of conflict and to formulate solutions capable of ensuring the sustainable development of countries in the subregion.

The current situation in many countries reminds us of the cruel reality of terrorism, which remains among the most pernicious of challenges and thus the most difficult to overcome. We must therefore demonstrate greater solidarity to contain it. In particular, we call for diligent implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and, in that connection, effective international cooperation to strengthen the current legal arsenal and the conclusion of a comprehensive convention as soon as possible.

By working for sustainable peace, we offer our States the best guarantee for their economic development. Nevertheless, the current international economic reality, which is characterized by globalization and excessive liberalization, continues to batter economies such as that of Burkina Faso. What is more, these fragile economies must contend with unfair trade rules.

Several years ago, President Blaise Compaoré, by launching his crusade against subsidies for Northern cotton growers — a crusade that was also carried out on behalf of his peers in Benin, Mali and Chad — sought to put an end to one of the most cynical practices of international trade. We hope to see the conclusion of the Doha Round of negotiations, which will place development at the heart of international trade.

Millions of men, women and children — particularly in Africa — are waiting to benefit from the positive impact of international trade in the hope that it

will contribute to their development and to the improvement of their living conditions. For them, poverty and misery are not statistics or assessments, let alone projections. They are the mother who, because there is no drinking water or no health facility within a distance of 10 kilometres, sees the baby whom she bore with difficulty die in her arms; they are the child who is eager for knowledge but who will never go to school; they are the father who sees his only son confront the wrath of the sea and jeopardize his life in search of a supposedly better life on some shore. Those are the daily tragedies to which all of us here can attest.

We have the means to act. We must act quickly. We must act now.

For a number of years, we have engaged the United Nations in a process of qualitative change to equip it with the means to deal with the demands of the modern world and to be able to effectively fulfil the aspirations of peoples. However, while the achievements are considerable, the task remains vast and the expectations pressing. Thus, we must demonstrate the will and the discernment to give the Organization viable structures and adequate means. Burkina Faso hopes that, at the end of this process, the historical wrongs committed against Africa and other parts of the world will be corrected, particularly at the level of the Security Council.

We also deplore the ongoing injustice committed against the Republic of China on Taiwan, whose legitimate aspiration to participate fully in world affairs has been denied. Nevertheless, that country is a good example of successful democracy and social and economic development. By depriving 25 million men and women of the right to make their contribution to the realization of United Nations principles and objectives, our Organization is also depriving itself of its own quest for modernity and universality. Therefore, it is a new United Nations, open to all, that Burkina Faso earnestly calls for.

Burkina Faso reaffirms its faith in multilateralism and in the role of the United Nations as an irreplaceable instrument for peace, development and the promotion of dialogue among peoples, which it is our historic duty to preserve and strengthen.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency The Honourable Samuel Insanally, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana and former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): At the outset of my statement, I wish to offer the President and our newly appointed Secretary-General my warmest congratulations and best wishes for the success of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, which has as its main focus the impact of climate change on global peace and development.

As the recently concluded High-level Event revealed, there is now a greater awareness of that issue and of the need to address them with greater urgency. Like the legendary Rip Van Winkle, we appear to have finally awakened from a long and deep slumber, only to find that the world around us is in serious danger of degradation. Our environment has become frightening. As a result of the increased consumption of fossil fuels in past decades, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by more than 25 per cent, which will, if unmitigated, eventually lead to a rise in the Earth's temperature of more than 5 degrees in the years ahead. Such warming is likely to produce an increase in sea levels of almost 2 metres. Since one third of the world's population lives close to coastlines, such an elevation will have a disastrous impact on the living conditions of many millions. At the same time, the world's forests are said to be vanishing at a rate of 15 million hectares a year, threatening the loss of almost 50 per cent of the forest cover in developing countries. Altogether, those climatic changes will take a heavy toll on the economic and social growth of many countries, through a higher incidence of drought, desertification, flooding and other natural disasters.

The primary responsibility for this environmental degradation has been laid — quite rightly — at the door of those developed countries whose industrialization policies and programmes have shown scant regard for preservation of the global ecosystem. By piggybacking on the natural assets of developing countries, those States have achieved astonishing economic and social progress and have created consumerist societies whose appetites for ever-greater extravagance know no bounds and must be satisfied at all costs.

In the face of mounting evidence that climate change does in fact imperil the Earth and its resources, some developed States appear willing to accept — albeit reluctantly — that carbon emissions must be

significantly reduced to preserve the ozone layer as a shield from the effects of greenhouse gases. Even so, they do not seem prepared to accept primary responsibility for protecting the environment. Instead of "common but differentiated responsibility", they speak of "shared responsibility", clearly demanding a greater contribution by developing countries to the campaign against climate change. This demand often becomes a conditionality for any development assistance they offer.

For the many developing countries which suffer from a chronic lack of resources, this imposition is clearly unequal and unfair. These States, including many in sub-Saharan Africa, small islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific, and low-lying coastal States like my own, are especially vulnerable to climatic changes and, consequently, disaster prone. The Barbados Programme of Action and the subsequent Mauritius Strategy were both devised for the purpose of alleviating the destructive impact of the many natural disasters faced by these disadvantaged countries. However, despite their initial promise, these agreements have yet to yield the measure of assistance needed by small States to overcome the consequences of climate change. Invariably, these affected countries must rely on their own limited resources to protect their environment from harm.

Guyana fully understood and responded to the challenges of climate change when, more than a decade ago, it made available to the international community almost one million acres of its pristine forest for the study of bio-diversity and the sustainable development of forestry. However, the future of this project is now threatened, since financial support from the international community has become increasingly scarce. At the same time, as our President stated at the High-level Event, the Kyoto Protocol rewards — quite perversely, I might add — those States which burn and pillage their resources but punishes others like Guyana which are committed to preserving their standing forests. This inequity should no longer be tolerated.

It is very important that any post-Kyoto agreement be endowed with the resources necessary for its full implementation. Development assistance statistics have shown a marked diminution in levels from past years, with little promise of the additional or new financing needed for environment-related projects. There, therefore, needs to be what has been called a partnership for additionality which, in return for a commitment by countries to the preservation of the environment, will provide adequate and predictable financing to allow them to pursue a path of accelerated and sustainable development. It is high time to honour the commitments made at the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development.

As a country which is below sea-level, Guyana has been further sensitized to the threat of climate change as a result of frequent floods that wreak economic havoc on our coastal population. The last major inundation was in 2005, when the economic loss suffered was, according to the estimate of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, nearly 60 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. Unfortunately for us, the tragedy, occurring as it did around the same time as the tsunami disaster, did not feature prominently on the international radar screen and, therefore, received little notice in the wider community. However, thanks to the assistance of a few friendly countries and the resilience of our own people, we are on the road to recovery. That experience, however, impels us to renew our call in this Assembly for the strengthening of multilateral facilities to provide all victims of such natural disasters with prompt and adequate relief.

As both the outcome of the High-level Event and the statements heard so far in this Assembly make clear, the battle against climate change cannot be won unless a truly global effort is made to save the planet. In the words of my country's national poet, Martin Carter, in his poem entitled "All are involved":

"Like a jig

shakes the loom;

Like a web

is spun the pattern;

all are involved

all are consumed" (*All are involved*)

Therefore, unless all of us, both Governments and peoples, accept in a deep and meaningful way the imperative of prudent environmental management, our civilization, such as we know it, will disappear.

In this new era of globalization, humankind has been made acutely aware of the deep interdependence of nations and the concomitant need for cooperation with one another to ensure our common survival. This

awareness notwithstanding, many in the developed world continue to practise their misguided "beggar-thy-neighbour" policy, which effectively precludes developing countries from satisfying the aspirations of their people.

Take, for example, the area of trade and economic cooperation, the main pillar on which globalization has been built. The developed countries continue to propagate the thesis that free trade will guarantee prosperity for all. The reality is that most countries, including my own, simply cannot compete successfully in fully liberalized markets unless they are assisted in making a gradual transition. Instead of assistance, however, some of the preferences that we enjoyed hitherto in some markets are being summarily withdrawn.

Witness the unilateral denunciation last week by the European Union of the Sugar Protocol, a legally binding instrument of indefinite duration, which governs the sugar exports of many African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to Europe. This step comes in the midst of negotiations on this issue and is clearly a sign of bad faith. It has been taken without adequate consultation and clarification and contradicts the European Union's own lectures to us on partnership and good governance. As a result of this action, thousands of our citizens, especially the rural poor, whose lives depend upon the sugar industry, will likely face great hardship. It is, therefore, imperative that in the negotiation of future trade arrangements, including the Doha Round, due regard be paid to the development challenges of small States.

Similarly, in the area of peace and security there is continuing blatant disregard of the rule of law by many States that, in pursuit of their own selfish national interests, do not hesitate to fan the flames of conflict in various parts of the world. As a consequence, millions in Darfur, in Palestine, in the Middle East and elsewhere are forced to endure unspeakable pain and suffering — pain and suffering which, in today's world of instant communication, we not only hear about but also actually see and feel in real time. Our common humanity obliges us to call once again for a return to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and in particular the peaceful settlement of disputes, wherever and whenever they occur.

The President returned to the Chair.

In this context, I am pleased to announce that last month on 20 September an arbitral tribunal of great eminence under the presidency of Judge Dolliver Nelson, distinguished former President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, sitting pursuant to Annex VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, handed down a decision regarding the maritime boundary between Guyana and neighbouring Suriname. The President of Guyana described the decision as just and erudite; the President of Suriname called it fair and equitable. It was another feather in the crown of international law, another blow struck against the resort to force and another victory for lawful and peaceful processes in the settlement of disputes.

Guyana had initiated recourse to the dispute settlement provisions of the Convention, which, I am happy to recall, was brought into force by our country's ratification in 1993. Under the aegis of a United Nations regime created by internationalism and the rule of international law, our two small countries can now pursue the development of their maritime space without the encumbrance of a dispute. It is an example of the peaceful settlement of a dispute that others might emulate.

In further demonstration of its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, my Government has placed before the General Assembly an initiative calling for a new global human order based on the principles of equity and social justice. It is born out of our conviction that, given the failure of our past efforts, the world now needs to formulate a qualitatively different and more holistic strategy, leading to a stronger political consensus and broad-based partnership before the General Assembly. The draft resolution now enjoys the sponsorship of forty-nine States and will in time, we hope, command the support of the entire international community.

As this new era of globalization unfolds, with its many challenges and opportunities, I invite this Assembly to support fully our appeal for the firm establishment of a more enlightened and compassionate model of multilateralism as the cornerstone of future international relations.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica.

Mr. Ugarte (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): The 192 Member States gathered here have not yet taken the qualitative leap called for by Woodrow Wilson in 1918 for our international order not to be based on organized rivalries, but rather on an organized common peace.

We must learn to tone down our national interests. We must foster a shared sense for what is just and what is necessary. We must understand that the basic premise of collective security is that we must agree upon the threats that we face and the manner in which we must tackle them.

We must accept that collective security, in order to be legitimate, must defend international law in the abstract, without preference for some over others. Nevertheless, we continue to have an unequal commitment to international law. Some of us have accepted a multilateralism that is based on open agreements openly arrived at, whereas others refuse to yield imaginary shares of sovereignty. As long as the latter continue to understand sovereignty as the absence of obligations and responsibilities to others, multilateralism is compromised.

Cultures and viewpoints from all parts of the world gather here. They do so because they know that the solitude of unilateralism is a dead-end road. Multilateralism must, however, have preconditions. Those who want to be treated as a partner must behave as one. If not, we will never be able to live up to our promise of "never again". The "never again" that we pronounced at the end of the First World War and the Second World War or that we asserted following the genocides in Kampuchea and Rwanda, still fails to mobilize us today to solve other situations that are just as unacceptable, just as intolerable and, on occasion, just as unimaginable.

It is not right to compromise multilateralism; it is especially wrong to do so when, through a lack of will, we affect one or more partners making a desperate appeal for help. In that regard, we welcome the fact that this General Assembly has put climate change at the top of its agenda. But how long has it taken us? We simply cannot be satisfied with a "better late than never", when in 1987, exactly 20 years ago, President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of the Republic of the Maldives alerted us that he did not come to speak about international political issues but rather about "the death of a nation", the death of a nation whose 1,190 islands will be virtually submerged with the rise in sea level owing to climate change. The emergency hotline must respond not only to 11 September but to all the emergencies covered by the Charter of the United Nations.

It is time to pay our debt to nature. We simply cannot continue to distort the evidence of climate change. Regardless of how inconvenient the truth may be or what our respective shares of responsibility are, the truth is here to stay. Year after year we are reminded of it with greater frequency and intensity.

In Costa Rica where the most species per square kilometre of anywhere in the world are found, we are committed to going beyond our obligations. We have adopted concrete and sustainable actions, such as setting aside 27 per cent of our national territory as preserves, the generation of energy using renewable energy sources for 98 per cent of our generating capacity, the introduction of environmental service payments and the commitment to advance towards a carbon-neutral economy by the year 2021. However, no matter how sustainable our commitment at the national level, our efforts will have less impact if they are not met by similar commitments in other parts of the world. Since climate change does not recognize borders, others with large environmental debts simply cannot continue to live in debt, as this accelerates the coming of the day of judgement.

Although we have seen some strides in international environmental governance at both the global and regional levels, we continue to be indebted to nature. The Kyoto Protocol is an incomplete instrument, not only because it has not attained universality, but also because it does not incentivize the sustainability of the primary forest and its ecosystem. In that respect, Costa Rica is working on compensatory mechanisms to avoid deforestation with different intergovernmental groups, such as the Coalition for Rainforest Nations and the Group of 11, to make sure that the post-Kyoto scheme does not exclude primary forests.

We cannot compromise on multilateralism. It is unrealistic to press others for compliance with the obligations that arise from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), while disregarding one's own obligations. Both treaties and all of their articles are part of an intricate

architecture of mutual trust that does not allow for any partial constructs. We must avoid both horizontal and vertical proliferation, promote compliance with all of the obligations that arise from those treaties and condemn every attempt to break the regime of mutual trust. We cannot allow for the proliferation of exceptions to non-proliferation.

Multilateralism is not built on a show of strength. In 2006, the world reached a record $1.2 trillion in military spending. According to the Millennium Project, with one tenth of this amount, that is, $121 billion, we would have met the targets for 2006 for all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in all countries of the world. In 2006, on average, for every dollar spent on official development assistance by the member States of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, $7.5 were spent on weapons.

Security does not come from multiplying weapons; history has proven this time and time again. Security comes from remedying injustices, easing shortages and creating opportunities so that we can have collective prosperity on par with collective security. In this regard, Costa Rica has been calling for compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, Article 26 of which commits us to promote "the maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources". Thus says the dead letter of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is in this spirit that we have pressed for the adoption of an arms trade treaty, a legally binding instrument that codifies the existing obligations of States under international law that may apply to the arms trade. Therefore we celebrate the adoption, by a significant majority, of Assembly resolution 61/89, which allows us to re-activate this noble objective of the Charter.

It is also in this spirit that we have called for the animation of the Costa Rica Consensus, so that international donors can reward those developing countries that are making sustainable and verifiable efforts to meet the most pressing social needs, including the MDGs, while increasing social investment and reducing military spending.

Multilateralism requires a shared sense of urgency. We need to face all global threats, all global challenges in a timely fashion, not creating a world with two different speeds: one in which we need two decades to respond to the call made by President Gayoom, among others, and another in which we respond in a just a few days, with binding resolutions like Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) or 1540 (2004).

Our commitment to combat terrorism must aim at prevailing not only over the terrorists, but also over the root causes from which they draw strengthen and renewal. In this regard, it is as important to combat the manifestations of terrorism, its financial channels and physical hideouts as it is to fight the poverty and despair that provide an easy harvest for extremists. To succeed we can no longer afford to be late in dealing with the challenges of development.

Multilateralism also requires a shared sense of justice. For that, we need more States to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As we advance towards the universality of the Statute and the acceptance of its complementary jurisdiction, we will close the gaps and loopholes by which the worst criminals in the world escape and hide.

Finally, we must have the courage to look at ourselves in the mirror, as an Organization and as Member States. We cannot permit this Organization's foundations to be weakened by a few errors. We need to learn from our mistakes and allow space for self-criticism. We do a disservice to the credibility and the effectiveness of this Organization if, each time a difficult or inconvenient situation arises, we simply produce a report for the archives. Our scant follow-up to the reports on Srebrenica and the Oil-for-Food Programme provides two clear examples of our apparent incapacity for learning.

As Harry Truman said, referring to the convening of the San Francisco Conference, "it was important for us to make a start, no matter how imperfect". Since 1945, this Organization has expanded and changed, improving through experience and reform, incorporating more and more cultures and views, putting into practice, with more or less success, the principles and purposes of the Charter. This Organization certainly does not have all the answers and does not possess all the resources required, for in the end, it is restrained by the lowest common denominator, that is, by ourselves, the Member States.

We have a world of reasons to persevere and prevail over the challenges we face. Neither the

chronic pessimism of some nor the ungrateful egoism of others will check the slow but determined march forward of those of us who believe in multilateralism and in a future of greater shared welfare for all.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nicolás Maduro Moros, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Maduro Moros (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our people, from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, have followed last week's debate of General Assembly. They are a people in the middle of a revolution that has succeeded in building new spaces for a political culture; a people that is informed and educated, that has followed closely the positions put forward at this Assembly. We could say that the debate has reflected the current situation in the world, a world that is struggling to build itself in peace, a world that is seeking new directions.

A year ago, the President Hugo Chávez Frías spoke from this podium to warn the world, to confirm the alert of many in the world on the madness, the warmongering madness that has been imposed alongside the desire for peace, a desire of the majority of the world.

Today, we can take stock of this warmongering madness. Six years ago, through a lie, invasion and aggression were sold to a brotherly people, the people of Iraq. It was built on the basis of a global campaign, a justification for the military occupation of the Arab people of Iraq, of the Iraqi nation.

Today, five years later, we can see the result of a policy filled with hate and evil. From 2002 to 2006 of the United States budget, $610 billion have been invested in maintaining the war in the Middle East — $610 billion to bring about death and destruction, $610 billion that were taken from American taxpayers in order to invest in bullets, bombs and death. That $610 billion invested in war, if it had been invested during the past six years that the Iraqi occupation has lasted, today could have meant social progress, equality and justice for the people of Iraq.

But the results are obvious, and clearly visible. Research by the world's universities states that more than 600,000 Iraqis have died as a result of the invasion and military occupation. More than the 3,600 young American were sent to their deaths. More than 25,000 young Americans have now returned to their country crippled, blind, deaf or disabled for life. The $610 billion invested in death has only multiplied the violence, and the result that we see today is that the invasion has not led to a safer or more balanced world. The result has not been a world at peace. Today, the nations of the world must acknowledge that we have a world that is less safe, with greater dangers because of terrorism. We have an unbalanced Middle East, filled with violence and divisions.

If that $610 billion invested in war and death in Iraq had been invested in life, we would be looking at a different situation today. With $610 billion, we could build 3 million clinics to provide health services to the world, as is done today by the people of Cuba and Venezuela through the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas for people throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. With the $610 billion invested in war, we could build more than 12 million decent homes for needy men and women of the three neediest latitudes of the world: Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. With that $610 billion invested in bullets and bombs for the purpose of killing, we could have built more than 300,000 schools that would have received at least 350 million children and young students around the world.

But no, madness and greediness for the natural resources of the world lead the elites of the United States to undertake an absurd and irrational war and to bring violence and death to the world. Today, if we took stock of the situation, of the direct results of this senseless and irrational war, we would have to say that this war has led to death, destruction and destabilization and has created even more sources of terrorism than it has been able to heal. That is why this senseless war is the worst example of how the security system has functioned to protect balance and peace in the world.

Today, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela calls upon our brothers in the world to think. We must adjust the mechanisms to find balance and peace and to stop the madness of war.

We have seen how in recent days there has been an increase in the international media campaign to demonize the people and Government of Iran. We have seen how dangerously successive threatening statements have been made against the peace of the people of Iran. Has the world, or have the

Governments represented in this General Assembly, wondered what would happen if the insatiable madness of the elite who govern the United States were to lead to a dreadful attack on the peaceful people of Iran? Where would such a situation lead us? It is time to stop that campaign of demonization, to issue warnings, to build restraining walls, to call for an end to, and make alliances to stop, the belligerent madness of the elite who govern the United States of America.

Today, the war and the struggle against terrorism occupy a very prominent place in the international public agenda. From this podium, we would like to reiterate to the Government of the United States of America the legal request for the terrorist Luis Posada Carriles to be extradited, in accordance with international law, and to be prosecuted for the crimes he committed in Latin America and the Caribbean against our peoples. Does this Assembly know that one of the most dangerous terrorists, Luis Posada Carriles — the head of a terrorist gang, who has been convicted of and confessed to crimes committed in South America during Operation Condor, who was responsible for the disappearance of hundreds of men and women, who has been convicted of and confessed to having blown up a Cubana Airlines plane in Barbados in 1976 and who placed bombs in tourist spots in Cuba in the 1990s — is now free in Florida and protected by the Government of United States of America? Does this Assembly know that this terrorist provided his services to the Central Intelligence Agency for 40 years?

We have asked the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council to examine that matter with all due diligence, and we are asking for the support of friendly Governments around the world for this terrorist to be extradited and prosecuted for having blown up a Cubana Airlines plane in Venezuela. This two-faced behaviour shows the hypocrisy of a policy that fuels war supposedly to combat terrorism but that, on its own territory, protects one of the most dangerous terrorists that the western hemisphere has ever known.

Likewise, we wish to express from this podium our solidarity with the growing call by Governments and peoples of the world for a fair judgement and the immediate release of the five Cubans imprisoned in the jails of the empire as part of the war on terror being carried out on United States territory. This demand that we are making before the General Assembly today is part of the flags of struggle that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is raising today.

From this podium today, we would like to welcome the victory of President Rafael Correa, of the progressive forces and of the people of Ecuador in the recent elections to designate the Constituent National Assembly, which will direct the peaceful process of change in Ecuador. This victory in Ecuador is part of a group of processes of change that have peacefully and democratically paved the way in South America, Latin America and the Caribbean, processes of change that they tried to stop through campaigns by national oligarchies, through international conspiracies and through media campaigns. But the voice of the people of Ecuador is clear. They have joined the voices of the people of Bolivia, Venezuela and Uruguay. South America, Latin America and the Caribbean ask, we demand that the right to peaceful democratic change in our societies be respected. We demand that the right to build, through democratic revolution, new processes and new economic and social structures be respected, making it possible to overcome poverty and to build democracies that are truly established by equality.

The world knows that there has been an ongoing conspiracy against the Venezuelan democracy and President Hugo Chávez. The world knows that in 2002 our people defeated an attempted coup d'état that sought the destruction of democracy and the assassination of President Chávez.

Today, the people of Venezuela are in the midst of a thorough reform of the Constitution. In December, the people of Venezuela, following a debate on terms and proposals related to constitutional reform, will go to the polls to decide in a sovereign manner what our country's future should be and what reforms we should undertake to expand the foundations of political, social and economic democracy. Today, we reaffirm to the world that we want respect for Venezuela's sovereignty and independence and an end to imperialist-led media campaigns that try to distort the real conditions of democracy building by our people and by our popular revolution.

Today, we reaffirm the need for deep-seated and comprehensive reform of the United Nations. A new, multipolar world of equilibrium, without imperialistic hegemony, is necessary, urgent and possible. We have joined the debate on United Nations reform. We believe that the Organization must be reworked. We

believe that the Organization must rebuild itself so that it can faithfully serve a multipolar world, a world of equilibrium, a world of peace, a world without hegemony. Seventeen years of a unipolar world has shown us the need for a deep-seated transformation of multilateral organizations so that they can be placed at the service of peace, equality, justice and the great causes of humanity.

Today, we reaffirm our conviction that the Organization must be thoroughly reworked and must move forward by democratizing the Security Council, expanding both its permanent and its non-permanent membership; by establishing new functions for the General Assembly; and by strengthening the political role of the Secretary-General.

Finally, let us move forward with new mechanisms for dialogue, coexistence and the building of a multipolar world where we can all be equal — a world where our peoples can see themselves as equal partners in a global cooperative undertaking to build the foundations of peace and justice, to overcome the insanity of war and to be able to thwart the desire of the world's elites to take control of the natural resources and wealth of our people.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its will to move forward together with the peoples of the world in a thorough reform that will transform the United Nations into a new Organization — a genuine instrument for peace, life and development.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Choe Su Hon, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Choe Su Hon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text provided by the delegation*): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. I am confident that your able leadership will ensure the success of our work.

I wish to begin my statement by reiterating the principled and just position of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to emphasize its sincere effort to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, which continues to draw the attention of the international community. That issue, as has been made clear time and again from this very rostrum, is no more than a product of the deep-rooted and hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — a policy that has lasted for more than half a century.

Peace and stability on the Korean peninsula is directly linked to the peace and security of the North-East Asian region and of the world as a whole. It is regrettable, however, that there has never been lasting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. Rather, there has been a recurring cycle of tension and détente whose principal cause is nothing other than the current, hostile relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

As history has proved, no issue can be resolved by resorting to sanctions and pressure. There has been no other option for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — whose territory and population are small — but to strengthen its military power for self-defence, on the basis of Songun politics, to protect its national sovereignty and dignity in the face of the United States' threats of nuclear strikes and harsh economic sanctions.

It is the Songun politics of the respected General Kim Jong Il and our active efforts that guarantee peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and a strategic balance in the North-East Asian region. Our Songun politics is a source of great pride and self-confidence for us, because it deters military conflict and ensures peace on the Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia.

Our national military power has a self-defensive nature, since it is intended solely to safeguard our sovereignty and to fulfil the aspirations of the countries in the region for peace, security and stability.

Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula was the lifelong teaching of our fatherly leader President Kim Il Sung, and it has been our consistent position that the nuclear issue must be resolved peacefully through dialogue and negotiation. Thanks to our sincere efforts, several rounds of the Six-Party Talks have been held to date. That made possible the adoption of Joint Statement of 19 September 2005, followed by the 13 February 2007 agreement on initial actions to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. The Joint Statement sets out the obligations of all parties in the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula on the basis of the principle of "words for words and actions for actions".

Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will not lead to our unilateral disarmament, but can be achieved by ending the hostile relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States and by eliminating all nuclear threats on the Korean peninsula and in the surrounding region.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea suspended the operation of the Nyongbyon nuclear facilities and allowed monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency, thus fulfilling its obligations under the 13 February agreement in a sincere manner. The Nyongbyon nuclear facilities are the parent body of our independent nuclear power industry, built with tremendous human and material resources. Accordingly, it is a courageous political decision to halt their operation and now pass to the stage of disabling them prior to eventual dismantlement.

As we clarified again at the Six-party Talks recently held in Beijing, the successful implementation of the 19 September Joint Statement requires all parties to fulfil their respective obligations in accordance with the principle of "actions for actions". Specifically, it depends on what practical measures the United States and Japan will take to end their hostile policies towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The United States should take steps to change its policy towards my country and to normalize bilateral relations, while Japan should make a clean break with its past policy of aggression and crimes and set aside its hostility towards my country, as it has pledged to do. We will watch closely every move on the part of the United States and Japan at this stage, the stage that requires actions.

Nothing is more urgent or important than the reunification of the nation, which has had to live with a territorial division imposed by outside forces for more than half a century. Ever since the early days of the division, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has consistently sought to reunify the nation through independent dialogue and negotiations between the north and south of Korea, as it sees reunification as the supreme national task. The historic North-South Joint Declaration of 15 June 2000, a declaration of national independence and peaceful reunification, sought to achieve reunification through concerted efforts in accordance with the ideal of "by our nation itself", thereby rejecting interference from outside forces.

The north-south summit now under way in Pyongyang opens a significant new phase that augurs well for peace, joint prosperity and reunification, taking Korean relations to a higher level, in accordance with the historic Joint Declaration and the spirit of "our nation itself". With the north and the south sitting face to face in a spirit of national independence and love for country, all problems can surely be resolved in the interests of our nation, regardless of differences in ideas and systems.

In order for the objectives of the North-South Joint Declaration to be achieved and for peace and reunification to return to the Korean peninsula, the United States policy of hostility towards our country, and its interference in our nation's internal affairs, should be brought to an end. In any case, the Government of our Republic will make every effort to bring about national reunification as soon as possible by emphasizing the concept of one nation, defending peace, realizing unity under the ideal of "by our nation itself", and upholding the banner of the North-South Joint Declaration.

I would also like to draw the Assembly's attention to Japan's recent attempt to use militarization to cast a dark shadow across the future development of the Korean peninsula and its neighbours. In addition, Japan's discriminatory and repressive acts deny the national rights of Koreans in Japan, in violation of international law.

Japan's recent manoeuvres against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon), have driven relations between Japan and our country to the lowest possible level. In an open challenge to the international community's denunciation and condemnation of Japan's treatment of Koreans, Japanese authorities have not hesitated to distort history, even going so far as to try to conceal Japan's bloody past crimes, while turning the "self-defence force" into a regular army with a mandate that permits pre-emptive strikes against other countries by changing the "Peace Constitution" into a war constitution.

Indeed, Japan's attempt to eliminate by force the Chongryon, the legitimate overseas organization of compatriots from my country, constitutes an infringement of the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as serious as any financial

sanction could be and a massive human rights violation according to the provisions of existing international human rights instruments.

We therefore hope that Japan will truly follow the path of friendship and peace rather than revive its unsavoury past. Unless it makes a clean break with its past crimes, Japan is not entitled to a future.

Although the first decade of the new millennium is already nearing its end, our planet has yet to be peaceful, even for a day. Indeed, world peace and security are now confronted with serious challenges of ever-increasing intensity. Principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality — the foundation of modern international relations — are threatened by attempts to extend and expand the "war against terrorism" for self-serving reasons, and by the high-handedness and arbitrariness of forces that advocate pre-emptive nuclear strikes and accelerated the modernization of nuclear weapons.

The present international situation requires the United Nations to strengthen its central role and functions in resolving such issues as global peace and security and sustainable economic and social development, in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Unilateralism and high-handedness should never be tolerated, as they violate principles of international law and the Charter, as well as collective efforts to build a new and just world order, based on respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality and mutual benefit.

Disputes should be resolved peacefully through dialogue and negotiations. Collective sanctions and the use of force in the form of armed aggression against sovereign States must never be tolerated on any account.

The Security Council should be a responsible organ that truly ensures international peace and security. It should not be used by certain countries to promote their own strategic interests.

The peaceful and prosperous new world desired by humankind must have as its basis fair international relations in which the sovereignty of all States Members of the United Nations is respected without differentiation and the principles of equality and mutual benefit are observed.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to strive for the creation of a just and equal world order based on the ideals of independence, peace and friendship.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Riaz Mohammad Khan, Foreign Secretary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): I would like first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to your prestigious office. Your vast political experience and diplomatic skills will undoubtedly guide the General Assembly towards success in dealing with its important agenda. I wish to express our deep satisfaction and pride at the significant achievements of your predecessor, Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa, during her presidency. Her stature and accomplishments symbolize the prominent role that women are playing in the Muslim world.

Let me also express our high appreciation to Mr. Ban Ki-moon for the distinctive and assiduous manner in which, as our new Secretary-General, he has engaged himself to address crises and humanitarian situations. We support the Secretary-General's commitment to improving the United Nations so that it can respond to contemporary challenges and opportunities.

The end of the cold war at the dawn of the twenty-first century gave rise to hopes for a better future. A decade later, the world is in the grip of deepening uncertainty and rising turbulence. There are new threats of terrorism, violence and widening divisions among cultures and societies, driven by suspicion and prejudice. At the heart of that growing malaise is not a clash of values or civilizations; it is the failure of the international community to address festering disputes and our collective inability to universalize the opportunities and benefits offered by the phenomenal advances of technology and globalization for the betterment of all peoples.

Conflicts continue in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. In South Asia, the Kashmir dispute is yet to be resolved. Old disputes are compounded by new confrontations. Also, serious challenges are emerging in the shape of climate change, energy security, and financial and trade imbalances.

In this complex world, the United Nations provides a critical and indispensable role. The United

Nations is at the apex of expanding international interaction and remains the only acknowledged instrument for regulating global affairs on the basis of agreed principles and norms.

Terrorism is a grave and pervasive threat. Terrorism destabilizes societies. It must not be associated with any faith or culture. It must be countered and rejected, addressing both its manifestations and its root causes.

Equally disturbing are trends to malign other cultures and faiths and reinforce divisions, especially between the West and the Islamic world. Tolerating Islamophobia in the guise of freedom of expression is dangerous. More than ever before, in this globalized world we need understanding, harmony and the building of bridges among all cultures and peoples through such initiatives as the Alliance of Civilizations, interfaith dialogue and enlightened moderation.

Conflict and violence in the Middle East are fundamentally linked to the Palestinian issue that has agitated two generations of Palestinians and Muslims around the world. Essentially, Palestine is an issue of freedom. Security cannot be ensured by denying the Palestinians their freedom. Salvation lies in what the Arab nations proposed in Beirut five years ago. Pakistan supports that position. The world has a historical responsibility to end the tragedy of the Palestinian people by enabling them to establish their own State in Palestine, consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the Arab peace plan. Israel must also withdraw from the other occupied Arab territories and fully respect the territorial and sovereign integrity of Lebanon. Efforts that deflect from those basic imperatives will only prolong agony and turmoil in the region.

Pakistan is deeply concerned over the grave situation in Iraq. We deplore the internecine bloodshed. Peace in Iraq can emerge only through dialogue, mutual cooperation and tolerance. It is vital both for the Iraqi people and for the region to ensure the preservation of the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq and full respect for its sovereignty.

Pakistan is also disturbed by the ominous confrontation over Iran's nuclear issue. We have insisted on recourse to diplomacy because resort to the use of force could lead to incalculable consequences for that already inflamed and highly sensitive region.

In our region, violence and the rise of terrorism and extremism are due to the developments of the nearly three decades when neighbouring Afghanistan became the last front of the cold war. Ironically, in the 1980s the struggle in Afghanistan helped the consolidation of freedom movements that culminated in the surge of freedom signified by the fall of the Berlin wall. In the 1990s, however, Afghanistan suffered international neglect and indifference until the shock and horror of 9/11 refocused international attention on that war-ravaged country.

The unfortunate happenings in our neighbourhood impacted on our own society, giving rise to terrorism and extremism, especially in the tribal regions bordering Afghanistan. We are fighting Al-Qaida and other terrorist elements with resolve and determination. We have deployed nearly 100,000 troops for that purpose. A large number of our troops have sacrificed their lives. In the tribal regions, we have taken political and administrative measures and have plans to bring about socio-economic transformation. As part of a comprehensive strategy, we have introduced reforms to counter extremism.

We are cooperating internationally and reject irresponsible comments and insinuations, especially in certain sections of the international media, casting aspersions on our intentions and efforts. It must be appreciated that the challenge is enormous and requires a sustained and protracted endeavour both locally and at the international level.

Pakistan desires a peaceful environment in the region. No country stands to gain as much as Pakistan from peace and stability in Afghanistan. We therefore support every initiative that could help the Afghans to achieve national reconciliation and to rebuild their country. The recently convened Grand Jirga in Kabul offers hope. A great deal will depend on the effectiveness of the follow-up mechanisms, especially the 50-member joint council that is mandated to reach out to the opposition to promote peace in the area. The international community also has an important responsibility to help Afghanistan with a Marshall Plan-like programme for reconstruction.

Pakistan is engaged in a peace process with India that has led to significant improvement in bilateral relations. The two countries must now seize the opportunity provided by the propitious international and regional environment to address problems,

especially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute that has been at the heart of conflict and tension in South Asia. Both sides will have to demonstrate political will, courage and flexibility. We are pursuing a solution that would be acceptable to India, to Pakistan and, above all, to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

President Pervez Musharraf has offered important ideas that have resonated with the Kashmiri people, who must be involved in the process. At the same time, it is essential to create an environment free of human rights violations in Kashmir if there is to be a sustainable peaceful solution. A peaceful settlement responding to the aspirations of the Kashmiri people will usher in a new era of mutual trust and cooperation in South Asia.

In our region, the incipient United States-India nuclear deal injects a new element. We have concerns over strategic stability, which we will maintain despite our firm opposition to an arms race in South Asia. Moreover, we also have a strong interest in developing civil nuclear power generation under international safeguards. Our nuclear and strategic assets are solely for defensive purpose. We started pursuing the nuclear option only after 1974, when the strategic balance was disrupted by the first Indian nuclear test. Our initiatives to keep South Asia free of nuclear weapons received scant response internationally. In 1998, we were again faced with a dilemma and had to respond to the Indian tests to establish deterrence. Our failure to do so would have created a dangerous ambiguity about our capability, with the risk of miscalculation.

I wish to reaffirm that our strategic capability is solely for deterrence and defence. We are opposed to an arms race and want to maintain minimum credible deterrence. We will not be the first to test in our region. We will never use our nuclear capability against non-nuclear weapon States. We remain fully committed to the objective of general and complete disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We want to be treated as a partner rather than as a target of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are committed to developing nuclear power generation under international safeguards to meet our growing energy needs.

It is evident that global consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation has been seriously eroded. There are several reasons for that, including the disavowal of nuclear disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the emergence of de facto nuclear-weapon States not parties to the NPT; the failure to address the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States; and discrimination in the conduct of peaceful nuclear cooperation. There is an obvious need for a new and universal consensus on non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful nuclear cooperation that eliminates dangers and risks and establishes cooperation on an equitable basis. In the coming months, the Nuclear Suppliers Group States have a heavy responsibility, as any endorsement of a selective or discriminatory approach could fatefully damage the existing consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation.

The world is slowly recognizing the existential threat posed by climate change. The special event held on 24 September has been useful in crystallizing the issues that must be addressed. Environment is a responsibility and an opportunity. The responsibility is to heal the Earth, which is scarred and degraded. The challenge goes far beyond Kyoto. Collectively, we need to restrain our avaricious and extravagant living. Opportunity lies in developing the environment as an employment sector to absorb a part of world human resources in meaningful activity. We must realize that with technological advances it will no longer be feasible to rationally utilize the entire global work force in the production, manufacturing and service sectors.

Against the backdrop of the new challenges, large parts of humanity continue to suffer from hunger, poverty and disease. That is tragic in these modern times, where the miracle of technology has empowered the world to effectively overcome the vestiges of our primitive existence. The Group of 77 has therefore insisted on a broad endeavour for sustainable development based on economic growth, social development and environmental protection. We should adopt coherent and mutually reinforcing policies and actions to advance in those three directions with the same degree of political and legal commitment. The United Nations has a central role in the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

Pakistan, as the current Chair of the Group of 77 and China, has suggested steps to enable developing countries to coordinate and enlarge their national development cooperation effort. In accordance with the

mandate adopted at the Second South Summit, we will convene a panel of eminent experts of the South to further develop common positions for developing countries in critical areas like trade finance, technology, energy and climate change.

Pakistan agrees that the management and Secretariat of the United Nations should be reformed and modernized, especially to improve the coherence and effectiveness of the system. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz is the Co-Chair of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. The reform process must, however, remain sensitive to the fundamental principle of the sovereign equality of States in the decision-making process. That applies especially to the issue of the expansion of the Security Council. Security Council reform must enlarge the representation of all Member States rather than expand the circle of the privileged. The Security Council functions must also be developed in a manner so that these do not eclipse the Charter responsibilities of the General Assembly or those of the other principal organs of the United Nations.

In Pakistan, our aspirations are the same as elsewhere: to accelerate our socio-economic development, to build a knowledge-based society and to contribute to peace and development in the world consistent with the deeply held values of our faith and our vision for a modern progressive Islamic state. That has been the orientation of the Government of President Musharraf for setting priorities and introducing reform programmes. There have been significant accomplishments in strengthening institutions, promoting democratic polity and building a sound economy.

To give a few examples, today we have robust grass-roots level democratic institutions with mandatory one-third representation by women. Our minorities have been integrated into the political mainstream. Our media is free, vibrant and assertive. Our economy has seen stable growth over the past eight years, and in that period, Pakistan's national output and per capita income has doubled. We are now preparing for elections, as our elected national and provincial assemblies will soon complete their full term of office. As we enter this important phase in our political life, we do so with the deep awareness that a strong and stable Pakistan is pivotal for the peace and progress of our region.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.